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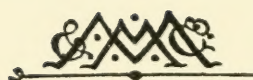


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JACOB SHUMATE

OR

THE PEOPLE'S MARCH



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A Voice from the Ranks

BY

SIR HENRY WRIXON, K.C.

AUTHOR OF 'SOCIALISM : BEING NOTES ON A POLITICAL TOUR'

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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I DEDICATE THESE PAGES

TO A

DEVOTED WIFE

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PREFACE

THE object of this book is to sketch, from the workaday experience of the politician in an advanced Democracy, the popular ideas and impulses which actuate the man in the street, and, emanating from him, control the community; and also to portray the social and industrial conditions which in our time mark democratic communities, and which mingle with and influence so potently their political life.

There are already many able and comprehensive works which deal with democratic governments and social systems from outside observation of what they do, and of the tendencies which they display. The purpose of this volume is to give the results of experience and observation from within.

There are no personal sketches in these pages.¹ While the episodes, political or social, are taken from English-speaking communities, they are not confined to any one State or people. The Province of Excelsior referred to in the book is only used as a Stage upon which to represent various phases of democratic

¹ Perhaps William Brereton and Walter Crane should be mentioned as partial exceptions to this statement. They have some resemblance to two old friends of mine.

political action and social life as they appear in different lands. To do this the 'unities' are disregarded, and things that might have happened in an American State are dealt with as taking place in a Colonial Dependency of England. But all that is related is true to the Democracy of our time and the social conditions that it induces, the essential features of which are the same in all Anglo-Saxon peoples ; though some phases, as, for example, special manifestations of the power of wealth, must be sought for in the United States. Hence the characters of Dorland and Jortin, sketched in these pages, are taken by the writer from American types.

Much that is in this book deals with certain weak points that the Democracy of our age is developing. It must not be supposed, because the writer points attention to these, that he condemns Democracy. Like all forms of government which have preceded it and which will follow it, it is in many respects imperfect. But self-government by peoples is obviously the condition decreed by Providence for Western civilisation in its present stage of progress. That fact alone entitles it to respect. And the great hope with regard to it is that, taught by experience, and as the result of the general intelligence of the people, enlightened by free discussion, it will rise superior to defects that now mark it, and to dangers that threaten it. But it can only do this if there is free discussion of its methods of government, and honest, truthful representation of what may be amiss in those methods.

Among the many persons sketched in these pages there will be found neither great heroes nor great

villains. The only excuse that the writer can offer for the absence of characters so useful to the dramatic force of a story is that he has not, in fact, found either heroes or villains in his everyday experience of democratic institutions. And he has sought throughout to be, above all things, a truthful chronicler of what he has observed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE part that intellect takes in the popular movements of the age is like that which the chorus performed for the Greek play. It attends the drama, chants its comments upon the proceedings, sometimes moralises upon them, and seems to mingle in the action of the play. But the drama itself goes on independently of it. Universal suffrage has got Western civilisation in its grip, and is shaking it. But it has come over us as a social growth, not by the force of intellectual processes. It would be interesting to trace out the many influences that have led us on to where we find ourselves. No doubt, the messages and the inspirations given from time to time by the pioneers of human thought, afterwards illustrated and enforced by the eloquence of orators and the fancy of poets, have been powerful in bringing down to the level plain of men's notions and longings the successive advancing ideals of human progress, as each was coming forward in its proper order. But they cannot claim to have created those early and, at first, inarticulate impulses that they gave expression to, or those social causes that were silently at work, moulding the destiny of our civilisation. Each new principle of progress presses on with an inherent power all its own to the limit of its destined course, irrespective of arguments, and sometimes in defiance of them. Nothing is more impressive than the inevitableness of these onward tendencies. Forward they go, with little halting, and no turning back ; nothing heeding the discordant cries

of men, some blessing, some cursing, till their part in the drama of events is played out. You may, according as you regard it, liken the advance to the growth of a verdant tree, spreading out its branches unceasingly, to give more and more shelter to weary men ; to the incoming tide, rising inexorably, and submerging all obstacles that are in its way ; to the stone loosened from the hillside, and rolling along in obedience to Nature's downward law, till it reaches the flat plain, and has nowhere further to roll to. But there it is, the principle of progress towards, as we at least trust, higher things.

The present upward movement of the masses in Europe, first heralded by the Reformation and the English Commonwealth, and vindicated by Locke, got its last great impulse towards the close of the eighteenth century, from the Declaration of American Independence and the French Revolution. Condorcet, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, and the other heroes of the pen (empowered thereto by the printing press and cheap paper) gave voice to the ideas and yearnings that had been mutely surging around them. Rousseau's *Contrat Social* had a special influence, because it so truly voiced the feelings and wishes of the average man. It is a plausible, comfortable theory for people generally, and it echoed the common sentiment that was gradually rising. The people had been slowly growing into the condition in which they were ready to hearken to these new voices, and to feel in them an echo to their own dimly-shadowed aspirations. D'Alembert, speaking before the French Revolution, says that he could see the change in his lifetime. In 1729 the whole French nation 'were drunk with joy' at the birth of the Dauphin ; while, when he was writing, fifty years later, that event was regarded with indifference.

A generation or two earlier these writings would have fallen flat upon the multitude, just as the *Contrat Social* would now before the four hundred millions of China, though it were printed in all the dialects of that people, and laid at the door of every hut.

But when peoples are ready, the writings of men of genius then give voice to the rising aspirations of the crowd, furnishing arguments and clever theories to justify facts

that are beginning to accomplish themselves. Statesmen and authors may have hastened the advance in some countries, and delayed it in others; may have sought to confine it within certain safe lines, as did the framers of the United States Constitution; may have imparted to it different surface aspects, suited to the national habits of different peoples; but all the while the advance goes on, with an inherent power, like a destiny imposed by Providence upon our civilisation. It moves forward, to illustrate great things by small, much as the two o'clock dinner of 1700 develops by successive advances into the eight o'clock dinner of 1902.

The history of the leading political events of the last two centuries, in both Europe and America, shows this forward movement as owing its progress to social causes and its own inherent power, and being little directed by arguments or intellectual conclusions. The people take power, and then clever men find good reasons for their doing so.

For the great popular movements have not been controlled by intellect. The able men who framed the Constitution of the United States did attempt, and with much political ability, to lay down lines at once broad and safe, within which the stream of Democracy should forever roll on. But, as the current rose, it quietly and naturally flowed over the banks and submerged the checks that were so valued by the statesmen. In this way the Electoral College of the Federalist and the Caucus of Jefferson have grown, without any formal amendment of the Constitution, into the Electoral College and the Caucus that we see to-day. In like manner the advances of the nineteenth century have come about by outside pressure, or their own inherent force, not owing to the arguments by which they were supported. The unity of Germany and Italy was accomplished not 'by speechifying and majorities, but by blood and iron.' Universal suffrage has been accepted by nation after nation, not because the rulers wanted it, but because they could not help it. Catholic Emancipation, and the Reform of 1832, in England were forced on by the fear of popular convulsions, Free Trade by the dread of famine, the emancipation of the slave in America by the exigencies of war, the abolition of the Irish Church by the exigencies of politics.

But further, Democratic critics are keen to point out that mental power has too often been unfriendly to the early efforts of reformers on behalf of causes that all men admit now to be righteous. They ask, Did intellect lead the way in abolishing slavery, spreading education, mitigating the horrors of the early factory system, or the cruelty of the penal code? In the United States, Calhoun, Clay, and Webster, who were beyond question the most intellectual statesmen of the Union, all three, as late as the middle of the last century, gave the best of their talents not only to defend slavery, but to maintain that odious feature of it, the claim by the Southern States to have their escaped slaves hunted down in the Free States and returned to them. All the time, thousands of plain, uneducated men were denouncing the thing as a national crime.

We can scarcely wonder, then, that the Democracy of our times uses intellect as a servant, not as a master. It takes its help to justify and sound the praises of what the sovereign people themselves determine to do. But where its teaching runs counter to the general inclination, it quietly pushes it aside. McKinley, the chosen ruler of seventy millions of men, declared that he would rather take his political economy from the puddler or the potter than from the professor. Bryan, his antagonist, for whom 6,502,925 men voted, announced that the men on the carpenter's bench knew more of the Currency question than did all Lombard Street. Two ideas have thus taken hold of the popular mind with dominating force. One is a presumption in favour of every forward movement because it is new; the other a distrust of intellectual conclusions as a safe guide in politics, and a confidence in the unlettered wisdom of peoples.

But is intellect then to have no part in the progress of our time? Is this progress to resolve itself into a mere blind groping by peoples after their own fancies, going round the circle till it gets to the top, and then, in order to go somewhere, coursing back round the other side, till it reaches in another shape the evils it started from? Surely there is one necessary service which the brain and the pen can render to Democracies, and which they would disregard at

their peril. Peoples can learn effectually only by experience. Kings and aristocracies may reason out and forecast a policy ; but experience is the lesson-book of peoples. If mistakes are made and false theories indulged in, the bad results that follow, if intelligently observed, naturally work their own correction. It is the boast of Freedom, not that it does not fall into errors, but that it supplies itself the means of remedying them. And how is this to be done ? How is this experience to be gained ? By observing truly and proclaiming honestly the facts of popular government in our time, and the lessons to be learnt from them, and from those social experiments with which politics are so identified to-day. There is need of some one doing this effectively, as unless peoples' attention is called to them, the teachings of experience are given in vain. In the stress of daily politics this useful, if thankless, duty is apt to be overlooked. Who is fitted to discharge it ? And further, who cares to undertake it ?

For it is the most difficult thing in the world to learn facts, even the facts of the daily life we live. Different persons observe the same facts and draw diverse, or perhaps contrary, conclusions as to what the facts are. It is this that makes necessary the prolonged and skilful investigations of our law courts, in order to determine the truth about a street accident, that perhaps fifty people have witnessed. How much more is intelligent inquiry needed into the complex and varying phenomena that social and political life present to us from day to day, if we would learn correctly first what the facts are, and then their true significance ? Human affairs are in such a mixed condition that most men have neither the time nor the aptitude necessary to disentangle them, and view them in their true light and just relative proportions. If, indeed, we look at popular government as it exists to-day, we find some lauding it as not only the best form of political institutions that men have yet reached, but as bearing within it the golden promise of the emancipation of the race from the social ills that have so long oppressed mankind. Others look out upon the same facts, and declare that their outcome will be the gradual decay of this cycle of civilisation ; while some say that the

whole controversy is as idle as it would be for a middle-aged man to discuss whether he would rather be fifty years of age than twenty. The only thing he can be sure of is that he is growing on, in due course, through the appointed stages of his life.

But if we are to learn the true facts regarding any system, we can only do so by inside experience of its working. If you would know the meaning of the principles of our legal administration and their operation in the daily practice of the courts, ask the lawyers. If you would understand the army, march in the ranks ; if the stage, go behind the footlights ; and if you would know something of the true working of self-government in our time, ask the working-day politician. But the difficulty is, that the experience which gives knowledge often warps observation—and this by the innocent operation of natural causes. Divines are apt to become narrowed by their creeds, lawyers enthralled by their precedents, scientists made visionary by their theories ; and as for the politicians, have not they been ever distrusted ? Does not omniscient Shakespeare appear to take for granted that we cannot trust to their seeing truthfully ?

Like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.

This feeling against politicians is the expression of that natural dissatisfaction with their Governments that men have always displayed. And, truth to say, the reverence of the people for their institutions does not appear to increase, as they are made more popular, and are brought closer to themselves in their everyday experience. But where will more unsparing denunciations of the shortcomings of political institutions be found than those from politicians themselves ? Could any men have exposed more fearlessly the blots that mar politics in the United States than have the public men there ? Naturally so ; for they meet face to face the evils that outsiders only hear about, and, as honest men, feel more strongly about them than others can.

Now, we propose to learn from one of these politicians his experience of the daily working of democratic self-

government, and of the social conditions that it promotes. The blessings of freedom and all that we enjoy under popular rule are taken by us for granted, as matter of common observation and daily experience. The information which he can give will be more instructive if it is directed towards the weak points that mar its undoubted merits, and impair the full scope of the usefulness that ought to attend government by the people and for them. He does truer service to Democracy who directs attention to these, so that experience may lead to reform, than the courtier who is always smiling before the new sovereign.

We do not say that all we attribute to Our Politician has occurred in fact ; but all would naturally and truly arise from the everyday conditions of our present popular political life, in England, America, the Continent, or the Colonies. Democracy naturally tends to become the same everywhere. The poor govern, and the wants and feelings of the poor are alike the world over, and are stronger bonds of union than are their various nationalities elements of diversity. When you meet the masses you come on the bed rock ; national differences are more apparent in the upper strata. Some of the experiences detailed in these pages are drawn from small democratic communities, such as the one in which the story is ostensibly laid ; and in a small State, free from national cares, you will often see, as in a model, the operation of principles and the drift of tendencies more clearly than you could trace them in the complex concerns of a great nation. It is easy to take note of what moves a million men in one province ; but not so easy to follow the impulses that affect seventy millions over a continent of many latitudes. And not only is it easier to observe popular impulses in smaller spheres, but the impulses themselves are more immediate and direct. Small communities go forward more promptly than large ones, and thus show all the better what we are working towards. The truest view of social movements is got by observing their small beginnings.

If, then, we are to have useful lessons from experience, the observation from which we draw must, as we have said, be from the inside ; the observer must be honest, must know what to observe and what to inquire into. And he must be

loyal to the institutions he is working under; for what Sovereign will hearken to the voice of a rebel to his authority? The loyal man will criticise all the more freely, since it is the special privilege of freedom to make experiments at its pleasure, and to learn from them afterwards with intelligence. In this way we look to the principles of liberty to cure its mistakes. That there are evils in our present political systems is no novel fact in human government. They are common to every form of government and of human society that has existed, or that ever will exist. What is new is the fierce blaze of criticism that is now thrown upon them, and before which, in due time, as the dawn of general intelligence creeps higher and higher, we hope that many of them will vanish away. But to further this, there must be truthful inquiry into facts, and the intelligent report of what are the lessons that experience teaches. This is the more wanted, as the natural feeling of men is to acquiesce in not only the government, but even the abuses, of the dominant power of their time. Established facts have a great assimilating power over men and nations. Who that wants a quiet life, not to say a successful one, cares to enact the part of the honest man at Court? But from Our Politician, as a loyal subject of the new Sovereign, and, moreover, a soldier in the ranks, we expect a faithful report of his experiences, good and bad, in the daily onward march of Democracy.

There is not in our time much scope for the heroic in politics, and if we would learn the nature of democratic government, and social conditions under it, we must do so from the commonplace incidents of everyday life. From these, if we will observe them intelligently, we can judge of the principles that actuate it, and of the onward road that it tends to take. Thus a record of things not striking in themselves may lead to important inferences regarding the movement whose tendencies they illustrate, and may instruct us how to avoid mistakes that, beginning in a small degree, and perhaps inadvertently, might develop into far-reaching results that would threaten true progress itself.

CHAPTER II

EDWARD FAIRLIE FRANKFORT

THE everyday experiences of Democracy do not, as has been said, demand a hero ; but we can derive information from following the fortunes of a not uncommon case—namely, that of a plain, well-meaning politician marching in the ranks ; and if he should happen to possess that instinctive desire to get at the truth and fact of a matter that some people are gifted or hampered with, this will add to his value as an observer, since, as a political thinker has said, the truth upon public questions is rarely all on the one side.

Edward Fairlie Frankfort was the son of English parents who belonged to the farming class, and who had, before his birth, settled in Scotland. He was the youngest son of a numerous family, and had been educated at one of the Scottish Universities at the cost of his uncle, Mr. Edward Fairlie, the successful Banker, of Brassville, in the Province of Excelsior, one of the most thriving of the self-governing Dependencies of the British Empire. That gentleman, when on a visit to the old country, some years before, had taken a fancy to his nephew and namesake, and, as the family were poor, had undertaken the cost of his education, but upon frugal lines. He had found claims made upon his generosity, and his influence and patronage in the new land, by quite a number of relations and connections, who all appeared to know him better on his return to his native land than they did when he had left it years ago, as a youth, to make his fortune abroad. Talking with his sister, the boy's mother, he used to say that he hoped to live to see Ted Lord Justice-General ; but that if

it was found too hard for him to get a fair start in the overcrowded old land, there was always a fine career open to a clever man in the grand Province of Excelsior. His parents had a considerable family to provide for, and were unwilling to tax the uncle's liberality on the boy's behalf more than was absolutely necessary, so they sent young Edward, as soon as he had gone successfully through the classes of the local school, to one of those Colleges in Scotland whose ranks are mainly filled by poor, but ambitious students. They gratified their feelings of independence by keeping an accurate account of all the uncle paid for him, and they constantly impressed upon young Edward that he must regard the money which had been advanced as a loan, to be paid back, as a matter of honour, when he had won his way in the world, and was able to do so.

But, for the present, poor, he and his fellow-students were; often walking long distances up to their college, in order to save the cost of coach or train; plain their clothing, and careful were they of it; temperate from principle, but a principle that was enforced by the pressure of narrow means. As for amusements, a visit at long intervals to the pit of the local play-house, or the back rows of the concert-hall, was all that they could get, and more than that, was all that they felt the need for, beyond the dissipation of occasional students' parties, taken in turn at their lodgings, when they enjoyed the exhilaration that was to be procured from strong tea, tough muffins, and intellectual converse. But, poor though they were, these youths were proud. They believed in the aristocracy of intellect. They felt that if they could only make good their place in this, the true aristocracy, their ambition would be satisfied, and they would be entitled to hold the head erect in the presence of the mere common distinctions of rank, fashion, or wealth. Ambitious they were, with all the enthusiasm and inexperience of youth. Toil, anxiety, straitened means, nay, more, loss of health and that heart-sinking which is partly the result of physical depression and partly of its attendant mental depression—all these they were ready to brave, buoyed up by the hope of fame; looking forward not to ease or pleasure, nor yet money for its own sake, but to being distinguished men—men raised above the

crowd by their own efforts, and by services done for country and for mankind. Could you have seen them as they worked away, night after night, in their garrets, you might have pitied their painful struggles and mean surroundings. But you need not. They were not only contented, but happy and enthusiastic, as one pictured to himself future success as a great divine, aiding the ever militant, but imperishable cause of religion, by demonstrating the reasonableness of the principle of faith in dealing with the unseen; or another looked forward to the career of a true lawyer, risen to eminence in his profession, and vindicating its principles above mere routine and petty technicalities; or a third enjoyed the fondest imagination of all in the life-work of a statesman, striking out great lines of policy and calling upon the people to follow him. To them the higher ideal of life proclaimed by poets was not a mere sentiment. It revealed to their consciousness a fact. Life for them was real and earnest. To them things were not what they seem to the crowd. Noble aspirations which make men better, though they may never be fulfilled!

When men are possessed by the political instinct, they are drawn, though they may not be in politics themselves, by a natural attraction to take an interest in whatever conflicts in public affairs are going on around them, and take sides as mental convictions, or oftener as their sympathies, lead them. With boys this tendency displays itself in the enthusiasm that is roused by the contemplation of notable facts in history, chiefly those that bear upon questions relating to human freedom and progress, and the ever-present problem between the poor and the rich, which, from the past, reflect forward their influence upon the conflicts of to-day. The College Debating Society is a field wherein youthful ideas and sympathies have a free course to display themselves, outside the rigid lines of the prescribed studies of the University and the Lecture Hall. Certainly, the rules of the University where Edward Frankfort studied forbade the discussion at the Historical and Literary Society of any political or religious question, and all subjects for debate were required to be first sanctioned by the Dean. But it is difficult to restrain the emotions of youth; and as there is a perpetual recurrence of

similar struggles among men, and a development, ever in progress, of social issues that are identical in essence, though varying in circumstances perhaps, from what is going on around us, it was easy for the youthful orator, while pouring forth eloquence upon the ideas and the conflicts of past times, to throw considerable light upon those of the world of to-day, and also to clearly indicate the speaker's sympathies with regard to them.

Thus, in discussing some question arising out of Plato's Republic, that philosopher's scoffing allusion to the notion of choosing pilots for ships according to the property that they owned, and refusing a poor man permission to steer, even though he were a better pilot than a rich man, gave a natural opportunity to the young reformer for incidentally exposing the folly of property qualifications for public offices. Xenophon's proposition concerning the Athenian Republic, that, as the bulk of the people did the work of the State, they should have the main voice in its government, was capable of a very wide and very present application to questions concerning the electoral franchise now. The contests and fate of the Gracchi were a fertile theme for exhortation or warning, as the case might be. But whether dealing with subjects suggested from the ancient world, or denouncing the wickedness or maintaining the justice of the murder or the execution of Charles the First; or discussing the principles and brilliant reasoning of Milton's appeal for the liberty of unlicensed printing; or dealing with some of the many questions that suggest themselves for controversy, in considering the course of the two great Revolutions that marked the close of the eighteenth century, the young men always found opportunity for displaying their opinions, and matter for the exercise of their sympathies.

Debating Society discussions are necessarily immature in their tone and scope; but there is a freshness about the unbiassed expression of young men's ideas that is engaging. They may be juvenile, but they are very sincere. In no arena of discussion in after life is there such an expression of the mere truth of opinions as they are held by the debater. The lawyer speaks as an advocate, the politician as an opportunist, the divine as a Churchman. But the subjects

which the youths debate raise as their only issue the question of what is the truth. Some of those that were discussed by Frankfort and his brother-students were juvenile in their character, but others gave evidence of research, and of thought in their selection. Among them were these:— ‘Does the usefulness predominate over the evils of national prejudice?’ ‘Whether is genius or impudence more conducive to success in the common walks of life?’ ‘Whether the pleasures predominate over the anxieties of even a successful literary career?’ ‘Whether national character is moulded by moral and political causes, or by the influence of climate and locality?’ ‘Has the drama been improved by the disuse of the chorus in tragedy?’ ‘Is it better to have a university in a city or in a village?’ ‘Is it likely to be a happy marriage where the wife is intellectually superior to her husband?’ All Frankfort’s impulses were generous and progressive. It was a pleasure to him to dwell on the great political and social conflicts of the past, and especially to follow the personal details of the lives of the grand men that figured in them. He pictured the individuality to himself of those who had done much and done greatly, and could not help secretly imagining how readily he would immolate himself and sacrifice mere personal happiness, could he enjoy even a short life like one of these.

Sometimes this enthusiasm for the heroes of history would assert itself even through all the discipline and reserve of the Lecture Room. Once, when Professor Praed, who was considered the greatest authority in the University upon the Greek language and literature, was lecturing upon the Fourth Philippic of Demosthenes, he came to that passage where the orator deals with the clamour ‘unfairly raised’ about the Theatric fund.

He asked what conclusion some authorities had drawn from this passage.

‘It shows that the whole oration is spurious, sir,’ promptly answered Frankfort. ‘Demosthenes could not have spoken it, because he expresses a directly contrary view in the Olynthiacs.’

‘You consider that fact conclusive, then, Mr. Frankfort?’

‘Certainly, sir, with a man like Demosthenes.’

‘Well, it is conclusive,’ replied the Professor, in very deliberate tones, ‘if the unexpressed major premiss of your proposition is correct—that no great politician can say one thing at one time, and the contrary to it at another. We will go on, if you please, to the next passage.’ Some of the class were rather inclined to laugh at Frankfort’s enthusiasm, but he felt that, come what may, he could never take a low view of the orator and patriot, not merely of Greece, but of the world.

At times, when he broke out in the College Society debates into inspiring sentiments concerning the perfectibility of the race, and the ennobling prospects that were opening to mankind, as men came to govern themselves, instead of being ridden like a dumb animal by a master; or the educating effect that the mere exercise of political rights must have upon free men, or the invincible and imperishable nature of truth—when he spoke of these things, though in College-boy fashion, he often infected his hearers with that mesmeric sympathy that springs from a sense of the deep feeling and the sincerity of the speaker.

But it was some time before he felt himself at ease in the difficult art, not so much of speaking (for empty-headed people can do that), but of thinking on his legs. In his earlier efforts imagination, and the force of that nervous sympathy that supplies the motive power, the steam, as it were, to oratory, taxed all his self-possession and resolution when he rose to speak. He never forgot his first attempt. He was nominated by the committee of the Debating Society as one of the speakers who were to maintain, at the opening debate of the session after the summer vacation, the affirmation of the proposition that the principles of the French Revolution represented the main lines of human progress. When he saw in the notice paper, which was published before they separated for the vacation, his name in real print, in the list of speakers, he felt that an important event had happened, as the French say. And so, indeed, it had. During the holiday time he had no other work to occupy him, and he could think of nothing but the French Revolution, and the lessons it bequeathed to mankind. At home on the farm, where he spent the holidays with his parents, he read all the

books upon the subject that he could get from the lending Library in the nearest town, including the suggestive and picturesque commentary of Carlyle, and as much of Thiers and Taine as he had time to read at the Library. When he walked about the fields he found himself breaking out into glowing periods about the wrongs of the poor in France before the great outburst; the heartless iniquity of the system of taxation, the utter rottenness of the Court, the aristocracy, even the Church—a social pyramid, with an apex of tinsel and gilt, and foundations laid in misery and despair! He spoke eloquently to the trees, and felt then that he could plead the cause of the hapless millions of France (for he fancied himself standing forth as their advocate) before all men. It has been said that no man could make an eloquent speech standing alone, to a stone wall. Delivering a speech makes considerable demand upon the physical and nervous powers of the system as well as the mental; and they might well flag in such a situation. But yet it is in solitude that the nature, gifted with that sensibility which is the source of eloquence, conceives those noble ideas and inspiring sentiments that afterwards seem to burst forth from the orator's mouth spontaneously, and responsively to the reciprocal enthusiasm of the hearers. And inspiriting were the sentiments that welled up within this youthful friend of man in his lonely walks.

When the vacation was drawing to a close, and Frankfort had gone back to his lodgings near the college, as the fateful day for the debate approached, he felt his enthusiasm rather damped, partly because, having dwelt so fervently upon the subject, he had somewhat exhausted his stock of sympathy for the wrongs of the French poor, and partly by the mental reaction that came of having over-studied his part. Also, he was oppressed by the stern reality now daily coming nearer to him, of having, for the first time, to stand up before a crowd of hearers, and, alone, challenge their attention to the words that he would speak. To do this seems to be a small thing to the looker-on, but to the imaginative beginner it is an event of his life; just as it is to the young soldier to hear the bullets cut the air around him in battle for the first time. As he walked down to the College Hall upon the

appointed evening, and thought of how much, for him, was involved in what the next hour would bring forth, he could not help the absurd fancy coming to him that even the passers-by in the street knew something of the momentous business that he had in hand. When he got to the meeting, he found it crowded, as all the students, and some of the public, had come in for the opening event of the Society's academic year. This rather roused his enthusiasm, and made him feel brave amidst his agitation; and he was even able to listen a little to the speeches of those who spoke before him; though he was oppressed by the idea all the time that several of the audience must be thinking of him and the first attempt that he was just about to make, instead of attending to the debate. At last—it seemed to him a long time coming—his turn came, and the Dean, who had honoured the occasion by taking the chair, called out, 'Mr. Edward Frankfort.' He sprang up. The people seemed quite different to him now, as, standing, he looked down upon them and felt, rather than saw, all those glistening eyes up-looking at him; and this, for the first time in his life—an experience that can be had only once in a lifetime. He spoke. He said, 'Mr. Dean.' His voice seemed something strange to him, as if he and it were different, and it belonged to some one else: not in the least like the voice with which he had harangued the trees. He had not heard it before in like circumstances, and he did not recognise it. He felt as if a deadening sense of oppression, or paralysis, was settling down upon him, and closing him round, coming somewhere from the ceiling. He tried to shake it off; but it seemed to have behind it some unseen power that was pressing it on, and which he had no force to resist. As for his ideas and his carefully-prepared divisions of the argument, which he had laboriously framed so as to quite exhaust the subject, they danced through his brain as if mocking him. Queer that at times we should be the sport of our own impalpable ideas—not their master! But so it is; and that even, too, at other times than when we are making speeches. He tried to go on. He repeated 'Mr. Dean,' and spoke some formal words. He wanted to name the speaker who had preceded him, but though he knew his name as well as he did his own,

he could not recall it. The spell cast over him by a nature in which imagination and sensibility had a great part was too strong. He sat down. The failure of a lifetime seemed to be concentrated into a moment.

The Dean, who knew him as a promising student, felt for him in his failure, the true explanation of which he saw at once, and in calling on the next speaker, remarked that Mr. Frankfort would speak later on, when he had arranged his notes. When the new speaker began, he beckoned Frankfort to him. 'I will call you again next,' he said quietly. 'You will be all right. Speak straight off. It would be cowardly to be beaten that way.'

When he got back to his seat, a sense of indignation against himself arose to our stricken hero, as if his personal courage was questioned. This instinctively braced him up, and quelled the sensibility that had paralysed him; which it was the easier to do, as the nervous excitement had partly exhausted itself by the one great outburst. Had he lived in ancient times, it would have been said that some favouring deity had stood by him, in the shape of the Dean, and infused strength into his limbs and resolution into his soul. So, when the chairman called 'Mr. Frankfort' the second time, he stood forth, as he seemed to himself, quite a different man, and words came readily. Mentally, he was not sufficiently collected to follow the lines that he had prepared; but others suggested themselves which, though quite different, were most successful, as they came forth spontaneously and produced the effect that speaking direct from mind to mind, and heart to heart, always does. He had material enough in his brain for two or three good speeches. Cheers burst forth—partly good-natured, but also distinctively appreciative—and soon he had established between himself and his audience that mutual mesmeric sympathy which the speaker, and his brother the actor, must secure in order to make a true impression. Then he could run or he could fly. Ideas that had never occurred to him in all his thinking upon the subject sprang to his mind; new illustrations presented themselves, and as for noble sentiments, why, they came naturally to him in any case. He felt a mastery over his hearers, as if he could say anything to them—could speak

to them just as he did to the trees—the very opposite to his first state, when he felt he could say nothing. He sat down amidst repeated applause; for young men are generous, and none would have liked to see Ted Frankfort collapse in that ignominious manner. They might have understood it; but the outside people would have thought him a poor creature! Not but that he had surprised many both by his first failure and his subsequent success; but he surprised no one more than himself. He often said that he could no more account for or analyse his feelings, mixed up as they were of physical and of mental agencies, when he succeeded than he could when he failed.

From that time forth he was a successful speaker at the Debating Society. He was also diligent in the class-room in working at those subjects that were required for securing the degree. With several of them he had little sympathy, and whatever benefit he derived from them, then or afterwards, arose solely from the mental training that they afforded. In a few years he had forgotten all the direct knowledge he had acquired in these subjects (chiefly the exact sciences); nor in the pursuits in which he was engaged would it have been of much use to him to have remembered them. But he worked assiduously and successfully at languages, political economy as then taught, and general literature; partly because he liked those subjects, but also in the hope of securing one of the lectureships in Sociological subjects, which he looked forward to as the means of earning his daily bread, also as the stepping-stone towards the ambitious projects that were ever in his mind.

For, like most young men who have the political instinct, Frankfort's great ambition, owned only to himself or to some bosom crony, was to sit in the Parliament at Westminster as the enlightened exponent of advanced views; but as far removed from the tone of the time-serving demagogue, on the one hand, as from the stupid Tory on the other. The ideal of this high type was, naturally, to a young Scotsman, Macaulay at Edinburgh, the recollection of whose career as a Representative of that city was still cherished there both by literary men and by politicians. What truthful and dignified statement of his principles by the

candidate ! what generous, even respectful, toleration of differences by the constituents ! How the Representative declined to bow down to the Clerical Party, dear though it was to one powerful section of his people ; or to truckle to the Liquor interest, dear though it was to another ! Here was no plausible, supple servility in the politician, nor vulgar, exacting despotism on the part of the people.

True, even this great constituency had its fit of popular folly, and rejected Macaulay upon one occasion, owing to a union of all the unworthy elements in the electorate. But how nobly did it atone for its error ! Modern Athens though it was—or rather, perhaps, because it was—it candidly and openly admitted its mistake, and returned the independent politician the next time, at the head of the poll, without his condescending to address them, or even to visit them, till after the poll. There, thought our youthful politician, is the true ideal of Representative and People. It would be a life worth living to be the spokesman before the nation of enlightened principles, thus supported by a constituency of thinking men—the electors honouring you upon public grounds for public service done for the nation ; and with nothing mean, or sordid, or tricky, or humbugging in your mutual relations.

When the summer vacation came round each year, Frankfort and some of his fellow-students used to spend part of it in making excursions through the Highlands of Scotland. This was cheaper, walking with knapsack on back, than going abroad ; and they maintained that the scenery was as fine as could be found in Europe, while it had the advantage of being identified with facts in their own history and associations from their own literature that made it more interesting to them than any foreign scenes could be. Thus at least they philosophically liked what they could get. With their homely tastes, and after the hard work of the year, they enjoyed, with a relish that the mere pleasure-hunter knows not of, the simpler kinds of recreation. The mere release from labour, rest after toil, gave a sensation of delight, especially to them, in the buoyant time of youth, that it is the special, secret privilege of the true working-man, with brains or hands, to enjoy. Some of them

afterwards rose to high positions in life ; but they never felt the freshness of pleasure that they experienced in these cheap but well-earned excursions.

They generally had in their party some man from one of the sister Universities of England or Ireland. No one was a more welcome companion than Myles Dillon, one of the most promising of the medical students of the sister institution of Ireland, Trinity College, Dublin. He was a clever, all-round man too. And they liked him not only for his intelligence and humour, but for his easy good-nature, which had more depth and greater sincerity in it than falls to the lot of that quality sometimes in your good-natured man. His companions used jocularly to question whether the true family name was Dillon or O'Dillon.

'Tell us how you lost the "O," Myles. It shows that a family is descended from the ancient kings of Ireland, does it not? What about the "O," Dillon? How did you lose it?'

Irishmen relish a joke under all circumstances, and never more than when (under their own guidance) it is played off against themselves. They are so polite a people that they revel with more genuine enjoyment in jokes at their own cost than even in those at the expense of others. So Myles would explain to them, in his rich Milesian accents, toned down, however, by the use of Greek, Latin, English, and other foreign languages, how he became plain Dillon. He said that his family were really descended from Royalty in Ireland ; only that an excessively ambitious grandfather of his, examining into the family tree, as they were aware only Irishmen could do, came to the conclusion that the true family name was 'The O'Dillon,' as coming from the senior stock ; which title he accordingly assumed. But this so vexed his, Myles Dillon's, father, who did not believe a word of it, and who was a very conscientious man about titles, that he dropped the prefix altogether and became plain Dillon. When this, certainly rather lame, explanation was, received with a general shout of derision, Myles would quietly continue, and, allowing that there was considerable ground for their tone of incredulity, would frankly admit that the enemies of the family gave another explanation of

the change of name: namely, the unhappy close of life of one of his ancestors, owing to the prevalence in Munster at that time of sheep-stealing, and the injurious consequences that attached to the practice. Ever since the unhappy close of the life of this forefather of his, enemies of the family had represented that they had changed the name by dropping the 'O.'

'You have it right this time, Myles. You Irish are a fair people, after all!' Frankfort exclaimed, amidst a general laugh, which Myles himself led off. But, Dillon or O'Dillon, and whatever was the real fate of his great-grandfather, the young Irishman was liked and respected for his own sake. He has his own career to make; and every intelligent, sympathetic man influences the lives of others. So we will let him play his own part in our story.

It was one of the unwritten laws of the little party, upon their walks, that special topics connected with the several professions they were working towards should be avoided, and the conversation directed mainly to literature, public affairs, or such subjects as concerned them all equally. We have said that the debates of boys are interesting from their sincerity. So is their conversation. It is so natural, reflecting the fresh, true ideas of each, as native disposition or fortuitous circumstances have for the present shaped their opinions or fancies; they are so real to them, and embraced with such pure enthusiasm. It is a comforting doctrine, and, we must hope, a sound one, that men are improved by the discipline of life. But we cannot truly say that they are made more disinterested, or more capable of generous emotions by age. No; if we would have lofty ideals of life, we must listen to young men such as our party of College lads, as they argue together and proclaim inspiring ideas, all the world seeming as wholesome and bright to them as the summer scene that lies before them in their walk. Different tones of thought were there, liberal and conservative, as they are technically termed, or cautious and progressive, as we may say; but all were genuine, all came fresh and true from nature. It was this that gave the charm to these outspoken declarations of young, intelligent minds, not yet biassed by the prudential reasons that modify so

much, consciously or unconsciously, the opinions of men. You may talk of the *noctes coenaeque deorum*, but these morning walks left also grand memories and recollections fondly cherished by these young men in after life.

Politics naturally came frequently to the front in their discussions, and especially the striking careers of Gladstone and Disraeli. The indomitable Hebrew had, about the time of our story, touched the highest point in his career, having returned from Berlin, bringing 'peace with honour.' Different dispositions of intellect marked some of the youths as the admirers of one hero and some of the other; but the wonderful career of each was admitted by all. They had many keen arguments concerning their respective heroes. Frankfort, as a senior college man (having now only to pass his Degree Examination), and one who made no secret of his political aspirations, took a prominent part in these wayside debates. The news arrived one day that Benjamin Disraeli had been created Earl of Beaconsfield, and this quickly raised the wayside controversy as to his real merits and what would be his true position in history. Those who were Conservative in their disposition, of the little party, lauded him as a real genius, who honoured the peerage by agreeing to enter it, and even reflected credit on Burke by assuming the title of Beaconsfield. Frankfort, on the other hand, maintained that no man had done more to lower politics as a sphere for a worthy ambition. His great ability and indomitable perseverance had enabled him to carry to the highest success an avowed policy of achieving personal distinction by whatever means seemed most likely to command success, irrespective of questions of principle or personal convictions. He embraced the cause of Protection and of the Nobility because they were necessary to his advancement; while in his heart he despised them, and he almost admitted that he did.

'It's easy for you to fire away in that style!' exclaimed Chadwick, the leader of the Conservative wing of the party; 'but you should be able to prove what you say. Prove that he disbelieved in the principles and despised the men.'

'I show that he disbelieved in the principles,' Frankfort promptly answered, 'by the fact that when in power he

always carried out the contrary principles ; and as to despising these men, only look at how he writes about them in his novels. Read his account of the Duke of Brentham in *Lothair*. "Every day, when he looked into the glass and gave the last touch to his consummate toilette, he offered his grateful thanks to Providence that his family were not unworthy of him." Just fancy talking that way of a human being ! I've never forgotten the sentence. It's like taking off your hat to a man in mockery and slapping him in the face at the same time.'

'Ah, never mind, you are too simple, Ed. Fairlie, to understand how novels are touched up. He stuck to the Aristocracy, all the same.'

'Not he. He was willing to join John Bright, only that John would not have him. After denouncing extensions of the suffrage, he forced on the adoption of household suffrage, in order to dish Gladstone. I grant you he has succeeded. As he said in *Vivian Grey*, he regards the world as his oyster, and he opened it right enough.'

'It's all very well, my noble ideologist, for you to fly away with these lofty views,' answered Chadwick, who had made more than one eloquent oration at the College Debating Society in honour of Disraeli. 'But in what is Disraeli different from Gladstone, your king of men ? Gladstone joined the Liberals late in life, as he says—in the 'sixties. Would he have done so in the 'twenties, when they seemed doomed to perpetual opposition ? Would he have proposed the abolition of the Irish Church as a matter of principle if men were against it, and if he did not know that it was the only way to get Disraeli out ? Would he have faced unpopularity for it ? No, you don't believe it, Frankfort ; nor does any one else.'

'But I do believe it,' eagerly interposed the other. 'Every step that Gladstone took he felt at the time to be the right one to take then. Of course, it might not be so a century before.'

'Ah, there's just where it is. I don't deny that Gladstone persuaded himself that certain things were right to do ; but why ? Because they were the successful thing to do. That's his way. Not to do them was to sink into insignificance,

and that's intolerable to men of great powers and great ambition, like both Gladstone and Disraeli. Oh, I'm liberal to your man; why can't you, with all your liberalism, be fair to mine? Of course, Disraeli did not insist, as you would, on carrying out his own fancies. He took what came to hand from the public—what they wanted. So did Gladstone.'

'Say what you please,' answered Frankfort, 'it is a bad thing when a nation worships an avowed opportunist.'

Myles Dillon had kept his peace so far during the argument; but not for want of interest in it, for he took great interest in politics, which he found a pleasant relief from the tension of the special studies of his profession.

'Well, you boys, ye make me laugh, you do,' he at last broke out, 'throwing things this way mutually at two of the greatest men of our time. Between you, what the two of you say is that Disraeli was an opportunist, as you call it, and that he knew it and said it; and that Gladstone was an opportunist, and knew it, and didn't say it. Talking of politicians and their inner convictions, what have their inner convictions got to do with it? How is the King's Government to be carried on? as my great countryman, the Duke of Wellington, remarked. Is it by every Parliament man saying, "I must do as I like"? No, by Jupiter! it is by doing as other people like.'

'But do you seriously say, Myles,' asked Frankfort, 'that the statesman is to have no principles or opinions of his own at all?'

'Stay, now. I'm not much in the business myself. In our profession we mend the heads that you get broken in expressing your convictions at the hustings and the elections. But what your politician wants is what has been beautifully called "the presentiment of the dawn." That's just it. When he feels it coming, he does not worry himself about what he thinks of it; he strikes up for it right off, and crows away. He does not care to negative the dawn of day.'

'Then you make the statesman a barn-door fowl, whose mission is to wait quietly blinking for the dawn and then when it rises to crow away as if he caused it!' exclaimed Frankfort.

'Well, you may illustrate it in that homely way if it suits you. But you have not grasped the whole idea yet,

Ed. Fairlie. He's to be very and particularly careful not to begin crowing, like some cocks, upon a false alarm of the dawn. That's where the skill comes in. You must be neither too early nor too late. If you wait till the sun is shining, why you are out of it. If you make a fuss too soon, while it is still and dark, you're voted a nuisance all round. The true politician has to be on the look-out in the right quarter, and ready to call aloud at the right time. My noble friend Frankfort here seems to go rather further and say that he's to regulate the rising of the sun a bit to his own fancy.'

'You know that's nonsense. What I maintain is that no man, statesman or other man, should say what he does not think because other people want him to, and because he can make his own fortune by it.'

'Very fine for you, Mr. Frankfort. But what is the use of his saying what the other people don't think? If the Politician is to think so much of his feelings, perhaps the people may think of theirs, too.'

'I only say he should act the part of an honest man.'

'What! and of a Politician too?' said Myles, who enjoyed putting things rather strongly in argument to his enthusiastic friend.

'Certainly; and I say more—that the Politician, of all men, ought to be the honest man.'

'Long live they so!' said Myles Dillon; 'personally I have no objection. Indeed I would be glad if you would introduce me, Edward Fairlie, to some of your, of all men, honest politicians.'

By this time they had reached the inn where they were to rest for the night. It was situated on the side of one of the Lochs of Scotland, where the solemn scenery produces a sense of elevation in the man who is capable of experiencing emotion in the presence of the grand aspects of Nature.

The mountain shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie
Like future joys to fancy's eye.

Is it by mere chance, is it not by the design of Providence, that the scenes of Nature are thus adapted to

delight, and even ennoble, men's feelings, so that we are entranced by the beautiful lines of a landscape, or look with emotion on the glories of a golden sunset? As they sat enjoying the prospect, while the evening meal was being prepared, Frankfort felt the spell of the scene. He musingly looked forth upon the hills and the heather and the still waters below that reflected them, and broke out, reverting to their discussion—

‘Oh, you need never tell me that self-seeking and cunning to catch the crowd, and watching the right moment to say and unsay—that this is to be the statesmanship of the future. Right for right's sake, duty unrewarded rather than charlatanism successful, to leave your mark on your time, though you may be wounded in the struggle, this ever was, and ever will be, the line of the true statesman. It just comes to my mind what our hero, Wallace, said, as he looked upon such a scene as this: “Oh, who would not die for such a country!” So say I.’

‘And I congratulate you on your noble sentiments, Edward Fairlie Frankfort!’ exclaimed Dillon, ‘and your having them so strong in ye. I hope ye'll be able to keep them. Your harp sounds beautiful tunes—if ye have such things as harps in Scotland still—but it's rather a harp in the air, as that lovely song has it.’

‘Very good for sarcasm, especially as it is Irish, Myles,’ said Frankfort. ‘But I can tell you that if I ever do get into politics——’

‘No, let me tell you. If you ever do, as you say (and I hope you may, since you are so disposed), you will pretty soon find out that what is required of you in our time is not to die for your country, but to live for your constituency.’

‘Only another of your ambiguous jokes!’ exclaimed Frankfort. ‘Explain yourself.’

‘And that I will to my own entire satisfaction,’ said Dillon, as they went in to their frugal tea.

CHAPTER III

FROM THE OLD WORLD TO THE NEW

EDWARD FAIRLIE FRANKFORT in due time went up for the examination that was to decide among the candidates for the Lectureship on Sociology and Political Economy—and failed. But he was a good second. His successful competitor, though he had a less original, had a more receptive mind, and a more closely accurate memory, and was also rather more exact in his mental methods. Our readers must not from this failure draw an unfavourable conclusion as to Frankfort's ability. College examinations test mental forces that may exist together with those qualities that give men success and power in active life, but which are also often found apart from any such qualities. They may sometimes reward conditions of mind and character that rather impede the achievement of great practical results in everyday life. Certainly some of the greatest men of action were poor scholars, and not only so, but lovers of colleges cannot contemplate with pleasure the number of men of intellectual power who failed to attain eminence at universities. Bacon, Milton, Swift, Dryden, Gibbon, Adam Smith, Scott, Goldsmith, Byron were among the failures. Ben Jonson's account of Shakespeare was that he had small Latin and less Greek. As for the value of learning in politics, according to Macaulay, who had political experience as well as literary knowledge, a man in Parliament may speak on even knotty questions of trade and legislation, draw forth loud plaudits, and sit down with the credit of having made an excellent speech, 'without reading ten pages or thinking ten minutes.'

Nevertheless the blow was a serious one to Frankfort, though the fact that he was a good second mitigated its force. The thesis that he sent in was mentioned as showing special merit, and the examiners gave him a highly favourable certificate of his general ability in the prescribed subjects. Still, he had lost the lectureship, and the modest salary attached to it was what he had looked forward to to keep him above want as he worked forward towards the profession of the law, in which his uncle had prophesied that he would become Lord Justice-General. Mr. Fairlie had said nothing about discontinuing the small allowance which he had for some years past given him ; but Frankfort felt that it would be impossible with self-respect to go on living upon it, now that he had finished his University course and was free to work for his bread as best he could.

His father's farm was not proving a success. The small profits that generally attend the precarious business of farming—and in all countries it is precarious—were becoming smaller still. Proud our youth would have been if by any labour, however exacting or depressing, he could keep himself independently, and possibly be able to help his family too.

He mentioned in one of his letters to Myles Dillon his anxiety to get some literary employment which would help him while he was fighting his way to the profession of the law, or to some other opening in life. His friend wrote back to him that if he did not mind expatriating himself from Scotland, and if he could command a sharp pen, and boast a receptive mind, there was an opening for him or some other man on the staff of the *Lofty Standard Bearer*, one of the most flourishing newspapers in the Irish capital. The editor, Brass Finucane, was his particular friend, and he was certain would give Frankfort a trial. Negotiations were soon opened, and before long our student was enrolled as one of the outside contributors to the *Lofty Standard Bearer*. He found in that portion of the public, for whose instruction and amusement Mr. Brass Finucane laboured, some peculiarities. The population was broadly divided as Protestant and Catholic, and there was the well-established, from time immemorial, orthodox state of pious war between them.

But strong as was the sense of hostility between them, it was torpid compared with the lively hatred that existed between the True Blue Evangelical Protestants and an active Puseyite branch of the Church of England that had lately been making headway in several parts of the country among the followers of that Church. The *Lofty Standard Bearer* was the organ of the True Blues, while the *Church Sentinel* was the champion of the Puseyites.

The editor agreed to give our youth a temporary engagement, and he was soon busy writing articles, some on controversial topics and others on literary and social subjects, which were more to his taste. When he saw the earlier efforts of his pen in print, circulating through the town, sold over the counters, read in the restaurants, he thought that he had at least achieved one great object of his ambition—the means of an independent living. So he wrote to his uncle, with whom, in Excelsior, he had regularly corresponded, thanking him, in the terms of affectionate warmth that grateful and generous youth is apt to express itself in, for his past kindness, and informing him that his engagement with the *Lofty Standard Bearer* would enable him to live in the future by his own exertions. At the same time he mentioned his failure to secure the lectureship, but explained the high place in the list of candidates that he had secured, and he enclosed with his letter copies of the testimonials that the examiners had given him ; as he was anxious that his uncle should see that his assistance to the nephew's education had not been altogether in vain.

Hope, the merciful heritage of youth, sustained him, as he settled down to live by his pen, while he at the same time worked steadily at his legal studies. He had in some degree the pen of a ready writer, and Mr. Brass Finucane, the editor of the *Lofty Standard Bearer*, after a while placed him on his list of contributors, and generally took from him two or three articles each week upon social or literary, and occasionally on controversial, subjects.

Every important newspaper has some special mission—some purpose that may be regarded as the final cause of its existence from a newspaper point of view. The final cause of the existence of the *Lofty Standard Bearer* was to

maintain the sound principles of True Blue Protestantism, according to Knox and Calvin, and especially to denounce 'Whity-Brown Popery,' as the tenets of Puseyism were styled by it, and, above all, to expose the *Church Sentinel*, the Jesuitical organ of the sham Protestants. Mr. Brass Finucane, the editor, was not Irish by birth, but he had become so by long residence, and he threw all the fervour of his adopted country into the views which he, or at least his paper, held and expressed. He was not dissatisfied with Frankfort's work for a beginner, and hoped that he would prove useful when he had become more acclimatised and had caught the proper tone for the paper.

For success in the work, a tone of sectarian exclusiveness and partisan vehemence was required. The practised eye of the editor soon observed that it was just here that Frankfort was lacking, and one day he good-naturedly gave him a note of warning.

'Your work now is not like your college work, you observe. We are not seeking after truth merely here. We have to write what is wanted, and when it is wanted, and in the way that it is wanted—to order, in fact, a leetle bit, you see.' He added, with a self-satisfied, chuckling laugh, 'People, after all, must get what they want. It must be according to order whether it is to eat, to wear, or to read—or to laugh at;—the public taste varies a bit too.' 'Certainly, sir, I'll do my best to write what the public require. I suppose we are allowed a certain amount of conscience, sir,' said Frankfort with a smile, encouraged by the kind manner of the editor. 'A certain amount of conscience? Any amount of it, my friend!' Mr. Finucane exclaimed, looking up with some surprise, and then adding in a quiet undertone and with his self-satisfied laugh, 'Any amount—that you can afford to keep. Like other good things, it is apt to be limited by your means. In fact,' he added, throwing himself back in his chair and looking up straight at his youthful contributor, 'the truth is that in public affairs neither side want one of their team to pose as an umpire. The game wants a man who can give the ball a good kick, and jostle the other fellow down. If you are not ready for that, why——' and the editor waved his hand to tell the rest.

So long as Frankfort was employed on general and non-party topics he got on famously. His papers were bright and clever, and above all, what editors sigh for, fresh. It was hard work for small pay, but he had, beyond the money reward, the glowing though secret satisfaction of seeing in veritable print his own ideas expressed in his own words, and of reflecting how perhaps thousands all over the kingdom were feeding mentally on the productions of his brain. In times of mental failure, when his ideas halted, and in times of despondency, when his hopeful, generous view of men and things was damped, he still derived consolation in his work from the consciousness of the power of the writer, of the all-reaching scope of the pen, especially when it was the champion of truth. You sit in an obscure room—yourself unknown—and frame ideas into speech, and a machine works, and lo! the next morning your ideas penetrate into ten thousand homes and challenge the attention of all men. What a power! thought Frankfort, and with all power is there not a proportionate responsibility in its use?

This latter consideration he found to rather hamper him in his efforts to fill first himself and then his article with the needful fervour and indignation against the enemy that the partisan and clerical topics which now and then were confided to him required, if he was to supply the necessary and stimulating mental food that the readers of the *Lofty Standard Bearer* desired. But he tried his best to adapt himself to the work; for he was all the while uneasily conscious of the threatening shadow of want in the background. If his writing stopped his bread stopped too. He often thought of the old lines, 'Those who live to please, must please to live,' with some bitterness.

It is an ancient observation that nature, though often hidden, and sometimes overcome, is hard to extinguish. This is especially true of writers who are not mere pen-drivers and who can make some claim to individuality and genius; for what is genius, however humble, if it be not genuine? Frankfort felt this early in his career as a writer. When the Puseyite party acted absurdly, and were really in the wrong, then his articles exposing them were clear and incisive. If, however, it was some cant cry against them

that he had in hand, his papers wanted force and sting ; though, as Finucane remarked to him, it was just then that vigorous writing was needed. Any one could write strongly if the facts were strongly with him. Then, when at times left to his own devices, he made absolute mistakes. Once, not having any book to review for the passing week, he sent in for the Saturday's literary column a paper on 'The Use and the Danger of National Prejudice.' He wrote it carefully, and with considerable satisfaction to himself, and was therefore the more surprised when he looked in the Saturday issue to find it left out. In its place there was a pungent paper on the narrow-minded and indeed unchristian attitude of the Church of Rome towards the Italian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The clerical organ published in Rome was denounced in scathing terms for sneering at the circular lately issued by the Minister of the Interior to the Mayors, which expressed approval and asked assistance for the society's humane efforts. The writer had evidently, thought Frankfort, either a great love of animals or a great hatred of Rome.

When he called at the office the editor accosted him in a not unkind tone. 'Very good paper that of yours : plenty of work in it, and for the matter of that, of wisdom too ; but not suited. You see we are a people full of prejudices ourselves, and we only stand a sermon on the Sunday.'

But he continued to take Frankfort's papers, and might have done so for an indefinite time, with occasional jars, were it not for an unfortunate mishap that brought matters to a crisis. It happened thus.

One Saturday afternoon Frankfort went to the office to see if the editor had left any commission for him, and learned that he had gone for a day to the country, leaving a note for him that was marked 'immediate.' Frankfort opened and read :

Lefty Standard Bearer,
12th May 18—

Dear Frankfort—I have to hurry off to the country—the wife not very well—and cannot get to the office till Monday morning. I want an article for the Monday on the Annual Puseyite Church Conference that was opened yesterday. Show them up ; give it to

them hot—rake fore and aft—‘Priests and Palaver,’ ‘Papacy and Water,’ ‘Catholicism in Calfskin,’ ‘Bishops and Bunkum,’ ‘Lawn and Liturgy,’ in place of ‘Broadcloth and the Bible,’ ‘the cunning without the cleverness, the superstition without the prestige of Rome,’—something in that way just to put the subject pungently before the public. Of course you won’t forget our friend the *Sentinel*!—‘the soiled and warped winding-sheet of a mummified Church,’ ‘the sinister mouthpiece of an organised hypocrisy’; a few simple words to that effect, just to close up, you know—much in a lively winding-up. You’ll have the ‘Sabbath’ to work it up.—
Faithfully yours,
BRASS FINUCANE.

Frankfort was rather perplexed by this note. He was pleased with the growing confidence shown in him; but was disappointed in the subject, and embarrassed by the consideration that for the life of him he could not see why the Puseyites should not meet to have their say, and even to sound their trumpet a little, unmolested. But the commission was so important that he dare not stay to raise scruples about it. There could be no doubt that the editor’s note accurately described the thoughts, or rather the instincts, of the subscribers to the *Lofty Standard Bearer* upon the subject. Something in the direction that he had indicated was no doubt required in order to soothe their Christian feelings, which had been much irritated by the Puseyite demonstration. So that evening he read carefully all the reports of the enemy’s meeting, taking note as he went along of the weak points and unfavourable aspects of the demonstration. He thus worked himself up into a state of some indignation, though all the time he could not help an uneasy consciousness, which kept grating upon him, that the True Blues comported themselves at their annual gathering in a manner just as unreasonable, and more intolerant. Having collected all the materials for a full article, he resolved to sleep upon it and to pen a vigorous deliverance the next morning.

As it turned out, this was an unfortunate resolve. The Sabbath day dawned a glorious morning, and after his breakfast, before sitting down to write, he rested a while at the open window, looking out upon the still scene of the city’s day of rest. The sun shone brightly and warmly upon the quiet of the streets; the very housetops looked less dreary in

the glorious light. Family groups passed by, each going to worship God according to their own custom, in their own House of Prayer ; the aged, that soon, truly, must for themselves explore the inexorable mystery, and the young, still full of life, all borne along together by that instinct of our nature that reaches out towards the Unseen—towards a Beyond and towards a Hereafter. And those bells, those speaking bells, what a spell they cast around, calling men to pray to God, sounding through the silent air their moving melody, answering to emotions deep in the heart of man but hard to express in mortal language ! And those spires of many churches, all pointing alike to Heaven—that silent Heaven, apparently mute and irresponsive to the entreaties of men ; but not really so, else whence the influence that was drawing these crowds to worship and find comfort in the living God ? And was the favour of Heaven to descend upon only one of those up-pointing spires, and curses upon all the rest ? And were we to be less merciful to one another than our Creator was to us all ? In this way did Frankfort muse as he looked out upon the church-going people.

As he turned from the window to his desk, he certainly felt that his survey of the city on this Sabbath morn, brief though it was, had not improved his tone for writing the article that Brass Finucane wanted. However, he resolved to do his best, and that, in this case, was his fiercest. He wrote away and denounced the too common intolerance of priesthoods, using up some of the editor's phrases, only softening them a little. He did not deny the right of any Church or sect to have what gatherings or celebrations it pleased, only they should conduct them sensibly. He analysed and exposed the weakness of some of the speeches, so as to make out a strong case against the Puseyites, while at the same time he admitted that a necessary result of free discussion was that much that was foolish must be spoken. It so happened that before finishing his task, he turned to look out again on the bright sunshine, and the church spires pointing upwards to the peaceful sky. As he did so, the noble sentiment of Anaxagoras occurred to him, and going back to his table, he wound up his article (quite forgetting all

about the editor's hint concerning the *Sentinel*) by saying that the effect of this hostile din of sects upon the wise man was, when asked which he belonged to, to make him, like Anaxagoras, raise his eyes aloft and point to the heavens.

He thought this rather good, and read his article in the *Lofty Standard Bearer* on Monday morning with much complacency. He went to the office early, as he expected that the editor might have some further commission for him that would perhaps demand prompt attention. He found that Brass Finucane had just returned from his short visit to his ailing wife. As he stepped into the dingy-looking room where the thunderbolts were generated, the editor (much worried by private troubles and public cares) broke out—'This won't do! I never got such a turn in my life as when I opened the paper in the train this morning. I heard some muttering going on between two gentlemen opposite about something in the *Lofty Standard Bearer*, and sure enough I soon saw the cause. Why, if you had altered a few sentences it would have done for the *Sentinel*—not a single good slash at them. It won't do—it's no use.'

Poor Frankfort was astounded. It now rushed in upon him that he *had* rather forgotten the trade aspect of the subject. But he tried to defend himself, however, in rather a confused way, for he was borne down by the wrath of the editor and its probable consequences.

'Well, sir, I confess I am taken quite aback. Surely I attacked them on many points; but I could not deny their right to meet and celebrate their anniversary.'

'Not if you were writing on their side. But you're writing for our subscribers. We'll lose them all in a month at that rate. If it was not for the sick wife I'd have waited and done it myself, or got Gubbins, who has no fads—I wish I had.'

Here the noise of footsteps and talking outside made an interruption, and with a gentle tap at the door and a mild push to open it, in walked the Rev. Samuel Croft, of the Church of England, the editor of the *Sentinel*—a quiet-looking and quiet-spoken person, but with very red hair and very thin and compressed lips nevertheless. He was called the 'Rev.' rather for business purposes, as he had never

been ordained a priest, and had only done duty for a short time as a deacon. He was dressed in a compromise suit of dark but not quite black cloth, with a band round his neck instead of a secular stand-up collar ; and the coat was of the short cut-away kind that has a decided strain of the secular, not to say sporting, element in it. Though he looked so calm, almost so meek, in outward appearance, he was quite a Red Indian with his pen : he scalped the person who was the enemy for the time being, and in performing the operation he was troubled by no conscientious scruples such as had weakened the force of poor Frankfort's article. His custom was to depict the True Blue party and their organ, the *Lofty Standard Bearer*, in terms that were always fierce, and sometimes seemed to be seasoned with positive spite. He felt much the same pleasure in good round invective that a surgeon does in a slashing operation ; and when he had in his leader characterised the proceedings and speeches at some True Blue gathering as 'civic malevolence reduced to a system, based, to be sure, on mercenary principles, but also largely leavened by the inherent and prescriptive rancour of a decaying party,' he would compress his thin lips with satisfaction and relax them again into a quiet smile. But it was all in the way of business, and what he claimed for himself he fully conceded to his official opponent, the editor of the *Lofty Standard Bearer*. Personally he and Brass Finucane were the best of friends in private, and in fact they often used to meet on a Saturday to have a quiet evening together, and, forgetting their wordy contests, to enjoy the company of a few literary friends.

From the sensible tone of the article Croft saw at once that something had gone wrong on the staff of his friend, and he resolved to make an early call, partly to inquire for the wife, who had so often hospitably entertained him, and partly to discuss a reduction on the postage of newspapers that they were trying to get the Post Office authorities to adopt ; but also, undoubtedly, with a view of learning the particulars of the disaster in the leading columns.

'Glad to see you, Croft—I wanted to have a chat with you about that postage matter.' Finucane spoke as cheerfully as he could at the moment, though he was not able to

clear away the look of vexation cast over his countenance by the business that he had in hand just before. Croft moved softly toward the table, rubbing his hands together in an involved manner, looking at his brother editor and glancing at Frankfort.

‘Ah yes, just looked in as I was passing. How is my dear Mrs. Finucane ; not worse, I hope—you look a little——’

‘Oh no,—good account. Better and better ; up soon, I hope.’

‘Ah well, I’m really pleased ; good news, almost as pleased as with that admirable leader of yours this morning on our great Talkee Talkee—so fair.’ He went on rubbing his hands still gently together, something that he meant for a smile stealing over his face, glancing round at Frankfort so as to avoid looking directly at his brother editor, who he knew must be dangerously near the point of explosion. ‘Admirable, indeed ; so impartial—just the sort of thing that your intelligent readers want. I’d like to——’

‘Here now, that’ll do, Croft ; we know you never get in a passion—you couldn’t if you tried—but I can’t stand pressure above a certain point. Sit down there—sit down. Mind ye of the story for little boys, how Rothschild made his money by minding his own——’

‘——business—oh certainly,’ the rev. gentleman broke in—‘certainly ; but this *is* my business, Mr. Finucane. I want to know where I can find this just man ; his conscientious tone is native-born for the *Sentinel* ; in fact, he could write for us both ; capital idea—answer himself,’ and he laughed with the self-satisfied laugh of superiority at the picture which he had drawn, as he took a chair and sat down in a circumspect manner.

Frankfort felt that his position was getting decidedly warm, as children say in their games, and that the sooner he was out of the way the better ; so, with as composed a good-bye to his chief as he could muster, and having got a growl in response, he hurried back to his lodgings.

He felt that shock which young people experience when they first meet the real troubles of life. It was not alone the particular failure that oppressed him, serious though that

was and unexpected the blow—it was the chasm that it seemed to reveal between the aspirations which he had been educated up to at college and the actual requirements of the workaday world. Brass Finucane told him when they met later in the day that there would be no use in trying to go on. He did not speak harshly, but said that he could not risk his circulation by a style of writing that might instruct people, but which at the same time tacitly rebuked them, and in no way satisfied their natural party feelings and antipathies. Perhaps in ‘pure literature’ he might do better, but as for public writing, it must be suited to public taste.

We cannot deny to Frankfort some sympathy. At the University he had been taught to seek truth before all things, to reason justly, to form and to cherish noble ideals of life and of man’s duty in life. His first contact with the world seemed to him to reveal a widely different standard from that which he had been taught to look up to. Was then knowledge, eloquence, intellect (the ray from God Himself) to be only of use for the dirty work of ministering to senseless and vulgar prejudices that the leaders themselves laughed at in private? And what became of the ambition which the college lectures upon the great men of history roused in enthusiastic young natures to devote one’s life to the service of mankind?

But whatever may have been Frankfort’s scruples, or whatever his inspirations, the question now before him was how he could live. His father’s farm was not doing well. The conditions of farming were not improving, owing to the enormous development of food imports; and there were even fears that the farm would have to go out of cultivation and, like many others, return to the condition of grass land. He made vigorous efforts to get literary work from the newspapers and the humbler class of periodicals, and he did get some; but the income from it was so small that he could barely live upon it, and he had nothing over for the expenses of continuing his legal training. This was a depressing blow; for, however pinched he had been, he had the support of hope so long as he was working towards his admission to the profession of the law. If he could only

gain this, a career was opened to him ; and why should he not ultimately even be Lord Justice-General, as his uncle had said? This hope had sustained him in many struggles, but now the prospect of ever reaching the profession was getting fainter and fainter. With all his poverty, he was desperately proud, and as he got his ninepenny dinner at the restaurant in a back street, he felt that he would rather have gone without it than confess his poverty to any man—not even to his kind uncle in Excelsior. So he suffered in silence from that shock which so many young men, addressed in universities as *ingenuo magnaque spei*, experience when they find how different are the conditions of real life from those that they have dreamed of in the academic shades.

As often happens to men who are blessed or cursed with an impressionable nature, health began to give way as the spirits failed. O gold ! gold ! thou visible god or yellow slave, let us not undervalue thee ! If our poor youth could have got from somewhere, in some way (as at times happens in fiction), only a small heap of golden coins each year, his heart would have been light, his eye bright, his energies vigorous. With this valiant Mars he could have fought the world ; success and fame might have been his : he might have been heard in the Mother of Parliaments, or have added renown to the Bench of his native land. As it was, he was paralysed by want, haunted by anxiety. Each morning, as he lifted his head from his pillow, he felt as if he were rising into a cloud of trials, dangers, difficulties, and mortifications.

His uncle had delayed for a while answering the letter in which Frankfort had announced his failure to secure the lectureship ; but his reply arrived not long after the unlucky article had appeared in the *Lofty Standard Bearer*, and it found his nephew more ready to fall in with a proposal that it contained than he would have been a year ago, after he had left college, flushed with an academic career that, despite his last failure, had been on the whole striking and successful. His short experience had been sufficient to disillusionise in him the sanguine hope of the college student that he may find the obstacles of life as easy to grapple with as the difficulties of the class-room. Mr. Fairlie expressed

regret that he had not succeeded in getting the lectureship ; but remarked upon the good position that he got as second, and the high testimonials he had obtained as to his general standing in the University. He exhorted him if possible to make good his career in the old land ; but said that, if this appeared to be too doubtful a chance, there was a very fair opening now for just such a man as he was in Excelsior. The William Dorland University was in want of a Professor in Sociology and Political Economy, and he had little doubt that he could, with the influence which he possessed with his old friend the Honourable William Dorland, and with the aid of the testimonials from the home University, secure it for him. Mr. Dorland, who was the Silver King of Excelsior, was the principal founder of the University, and his influence would decide the appointment. There was a good salary attached to the position, and the holder of this Chair was allowed, upon obtaining the sanction of the Board of Overseers, to become a candidate for election to the Parliament of the Province. Mr. Dorland, his uncle wrote, was a very progressive man, and he had always maintained that it was not only the right but the duty of learned men to make their learning available and useful in practical affairs.

This was certainly a tempting offer to Frankfort, and it appeared the more favourable to him in his present depressed state. Then the founder of the University appeared to be a man of such enlightened views—not only giving his substance, his silver, to establish the institution, but laying down the noble principle that seats of learning should shed their light upon public life, and not merely bask themselves selfishly in the sunshine of knowledge. He appeared to wish to revive what in past times had been the custom of some Universities, to allow its authorities to take part in State affairs ; and, without fully working out the details of how this would operate, it seemed to Frankfort that the need for some such development in our times was all the greater since the political world was coming to be governed by numbers and the general intelligence instead of by wealth and privilege. Then the salary appeared to him, in his straitened circumstances, to be quite a large income, and, joined to what he could make by his pen in the new land, would enable him to

help his family, and also do what he had much at heart to do—begin, at least, to pay back to his kind relative in Excelsior the money he had advanced for him. It was, to be sure, a tempting offer.

But exile was a sad thing too. All the early dreams of ambition—the hope of distinction in his native land—perhaps leaving a great name—speaking to the world—all gone for ever, and his career to be worked out among a handful of people in a strange far-away land! While his mind was thus being swayed to and fro between the advantages of comfortable exile and the grand but perhaps delusive prospects of a home career, it so happened that one of the weekly papers sent him for review a new edition of Thomas Arnold's *Life and Correspondence*. It was a labour of love to him to read and digest the letters of the great schoolmaster, they were marked by so much originality and breathed such a spirit of sincerity and truth. He was struck by a passage in one letter from the Master of Rugby to the Rev. J. Tucker, in which Arnold expresses a hope that some day he might be able to emigrate to Swan River, 'if they will make me schoolmaster there, and lay my bones in the land of kangaroos and opossums. . . . My notion is that no missionarising is half so beneficial as to try to pour sound and healthy blood into a young civilised community; to make one colony, if possible, like the ancient colonies, or like New England—a living sucker from the mother country, bearing the same blossoms and the same fruit.' It was the practice of the hero, General Gordon, when he was doubtful about what course he should adopt in any crisis, to open the Bible at random and take the direction, or apparent direction, of the first verse that his eye fell upon. It would not be correct to say that our youth, though he was of an impressionable nature, was susceptible to such fatalistic methods; but he certainly was struck with this passage. It put what he had to himself styled as 'exile' in a new light, at least to a man of high purpose. Might he not better satisfy his ambition, and also be more useful to the world, going out to the new land than if he stayed at home?

And the Province of Excelsior, then in the flush of early prosperity, was attracting to its shores many of the

enterprising youth of the old land. There was a great opening for well-qualified young men in the professions. The Hospital at Miranda, the capital of the Province, had sent home for promising men to fill vacancies in its staff, and Myles Dillon had some thoughts of applying for the position of Resident Surgeon. He intended to have a talk with his friend Frankfort some time about it; though he was not very eager regarding it, and was in no hurry to make up his mind. But the next time they met to spend the evening together at Frankfort's lodgings, the two friends found that they had mutual speculations about their prospects to indulge in. They had contemplated a walking tour by themselves in the summer to the Lakes of Killarney, and Dillon came in, intending to arrange for it; but the observant eye of the young surgeon could not but notice the altered and worried appearance of his friend, which partly arose from the conflict within him in making up his mind to face exile.

'What, a bit off, are ye? Not off our trip, I hope, though?' he exclaimed, as, struck by his friend's serious look, he seized him by the wrist and, physician-like, began to feel his pulse.

'Well,' said Frankfort, not even smiling, but looking desperately grave, 'I almost think that I am in for a longer trip than any we have taken yet.'

'Oh, come now, you are not so bad as all that. I know all about it. You are just a bit run down; I can set you up directly. So many decimal points of strychnine three times a day, generous diet, pleasant walking tour, complete rest from worry, and a few other simple things—that'll screw you up quick.'

'Good advice, Myles, I know. But I'm really thinking of going out to Excelsior. Uncle Fairlie thinks that I can get the appointment of Professor in the famous William Dorland University there, founded by one of the most enlightened men in the Province. The salary would set me up; I could pay off the uncle, assist the family—everything. But then of course I must give up all ambition—bury my life in the antipodes.'

'Why, that's strange,' said Myles; 'I had some slight idea of going there myself.'

'No, but I am serious, Myles. What I have told you is fact.'

'So is what I'm saying, too,' answered Myles, looking grave in his turn. 'I was going to have a talk about it some time when I have nothing better to do. They have sent home for a promising surgeon of the new school for the City Hospital of Miranda, and my old master, Dunleavy of our College of Surgeons, thinks he can get it for me. He advises me to take it, as I can make a fortune there, and it's so hard to get people to kill here, owing to the competition.'

'Well, that is good news, Myles,' said Frankfort, really pleased. He felt that exile would not be half so dreary if he had his friend with him. 'And you would make a big name in a young country, that will in time grow to be a great land. Just let me give you this sentence from one of Arnold's letters—I am working at a review of them'; and he read the extract with emphasis.

'Yes, that's all very good, Edward Fairlie, but what at present I'm thinking of are the salary, allowances, perquisites, quarters, rights, and privileges generally of the Chief Resident Surgeon of the City Hospital of Miranda, the great capital of the still greater Province of Excelsior. If they turn out correct, then it's for me to make up my mind. To go or not to go, that's the question, as Shakespeare says.'

'The idea of being banished to the antipodes does not frighten you then, Myles?'

'Antipodes? why, that is only calling names. It depends upon which end of the orange you are standing on.'

'And you don't mind losing the chance of being Surgeon-General to the Lord-Lieutenant, or whatever you call it here?' said Frankfort; for he was curious to know if Dillon, whose common-sense he respected, felt the pangs of blighted ambition in the same way that he did himself.

'Well, well,' said Myles, 'it's just how ye look at it. Better be the first man in a village than the second man in Rome—classical authority. Then, if ye wish to go on the high-level rails, why, there's the old world worn out—day over, sun setting—new one rising, life before it; the people

there first, the ancestors of the future, looked back to with reverence, noble forefathers, wisdom of ancestors ; here one among thirty-six millions of degenerate descendants, there one among the few thousand *parens patriae*, et cetera, et cetera.'

'Now there is something in that, Dillon—to grow with the growth of a young land, to expand your sphere of useful——'

'And then,' interrupted Myles, 'if you don't like the place, leave it. We're young—the world is wide. No engagement with the antipodes for better or worse. Quite the new style with me—union liable to be dissolved, on notice given, with or without mutual consent.'

'Ah well, for all your way of talking, Myles, if you do go, I know you'll do honest work there and show them all a high standard in the profession.'

'Certainly, my boy,' said Dillon, 'as soon as I am well off.'

Frankfort now busied himself with getting all the information he could about the William Dorland University in Excelsior, and the Chair of Sociology, which he felt was as good as offered to him ; and in inquiring into the conditions, social and industrial, of the new land.

Chadwick, his old college friend, wrote asking him and Dillon to join the walking party in Scotland that year. But, even had he the leisure, he did not feel sufficiently light-hearted for an excursion with the old companions through the glens and over the hills where they had often conversed about their respective ambitions for careers in the old land—that old land which he might soon be leaving for many a long year, perhaps for ever. Dillon, on the other hand, set out on the tour with a cheery spirit, and, as to the future, a hopeful heart, determined to enjoy himself for the present any way, and to settle finally about the City Hospital at Miranda when he got back to the College of Surgeons in Stephen's Green. There was no doubt that the possible prospect of having Myles as a companion in the new land, joined to his own conviction as to the noble work that lay before a man in a young country, helped to overcome Frankfort's natural feeling of repugnance to giving up his prospects,

or at least his hopes, in his native land. So, after some anxious discussions with his parents in the old home, he sent out to his uncle's care his application for the vacant Professorship, accompanied by several additional testimonials from the heads of his College, all of whom willingly assisted him, while some made him sad by regretting the loss of the career he might achieve at home. Still, he knew that such expressions were often but a polite way of speeding the parting acquaintance, and were sometimes only thought of when there was no prospect of testing the polite forecast by experience. In due time a favourable reply was received, and Edward Fairlie Frankfort found himself started in life in what he truly regarded as the high career of a Teacher of the truths of Social Science and Political Economy, with the prospect of being perhaps able to enforce those truths afterwards in public affairs.

It does not belong to this history to narrate the details of the parting from parents and home, serious matters though these be to those whom they personally affect, and ever have been, since the time of that command to Abraham, 'Go forth from thy country, from thy kindred, from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.'

When our exile, as for the time he felt himself, arrived at Miranda, the capital of the Province of Excelsior, he was met by his uncle, who brought him to his home at Brassville, to spend with him what time he had to spare before beginning his work at the University in the metropolis. Brassville was an important and rising town in a mining and agricultural district, distant about one hundred and fifty miles from Miranda. It divided the honours and profits of that side of the country with the prosperous Borough of Leadville, which was only some twenty miles distant from it on the one side, and with Tinville, which was thirty miles away on the other. The three towns were on the coast side of the Great Boulder Dividing Range, on the inland slopes of which were the vast silver mines for which Excelsior was remarkable, and which played such an important part industrially, and also politically, in the Province. All these little centres of population were prosperous and happy ; almost the only cause of unhappiness to

any one of them being when either of the others managed to get a larger share of Government favour in the shape of public works, money grants to institutions, aids to local bodies, assistance to farmers, official appointments, or other fruits of State beneficence. We will learn more about these towns as our history goes on. For the present we will follow the fortunes of Frankfort.

He found the branch of the Imperial Bank of Excelsior at Brassville, of which his uncle was Manager, to be quite a handsome building. The people of Excelsior liked to have noble public buildings even in their provincial towns. He was soon made at home in the roomy and comfortable residence portion of the building by the frank and kind-hearted reception of Mrs. Fairlie and the easy confidence of two young cousins, who took to him instinctively, as children will do with easy-natured people. He had not enjoyed such a pleasant holiday as this for a long time, and he felt great interest in seeing and learning daily something new about the country and the people who were now his fellow-citizens.

He called upon Mr. Siree, the editor of the *Brassville Trumpeter*, as being a brother of the pen, and also as he wished to learn something of the public affairs of the land in which he had cast his lot. Mr. Siree informed him that the politics of Brassville at present were 'to get into the new Loan and to get out the old Representative'; who it seemed was a Mr. Meeks—Ebenezer Meeks—and who the editor declared had sold the people on beer and robbed them of water. What all this meant was Greek to Frankfort, and he listened to it with that polite unconcern with which one hears what does not concern him, and which he never imagines ever can concern him. For the present, at any rate, he was free from care, and as he walked down the main street of the town he enjoyed the friendly greetings of the people, many of whom had come to know him as a visitor of some distinction, being the new Professor of Social Science, and also being the nephew of the popular banker. We will record in a summary method (after the manner of Homer and Milton) the names and the personality of the distinguished citizens of Brassville whom he met.

First he encountered Mr. Seth Pride, one of the joint

secretaries of the Woman's Temperance League ; the other secretary being Miss Hannah Gazelle, the popular lecturer. Both Miss Gazelle and Mr. Seth Pride were also active members of the Woman's Rights National League. They were walking together. Soon after he was warmly greeted by Mr. Ben Taft, licensee of the Blue Grapes Hotel, and local leader of the public-house party, or, as he preferred to describe himself, of the National Viticultural interest. Mr. Job Runter, the president of the Brassville Young Men's Association, was more formal in his manners than Mr. Taft, but he showed laudable enthusiasm for his cause—that of the young men and their improvement—and was able to give gratifying information as to the numbers who sought self-culture and innocent amusement, though under difficulties, in their wretched wooden makeshift of a Hall. It only remained for the Government to build a suitable Hall and offices for them. Meeks had given the Minister of Works no peace about the matter ; still it was delayed upon the pretence of want of money, and they had to meet in the weather-board structure. Then came Hiram Brickwood, the senior guard on the branch from Brassville to Great Gorge, on the main line, whose acquaintance he had made on the journey up from town. Brickwood was going home for the day, having just brought up the afternoon train. He was the active leader of the Brassville committee of the State Trams and Rails Branch of the Central State Workers' Association, whose motto was, 'Our rights ; not others' wrongs.' Nothing Hiram liked better than to have a talk upon public affairs, but he was in a hurry now, and had only time to mention that the latest reports from the city were favourable to the successful floating of the new loan for National Reproductive Works. Louis Quiggle, the land agent in quiet times, and also, by general consent, the most clever election agent in the district, took a special interest in Frankfort, as he did in all people who filled any public position. He was a cheerful, chatty little man, and simple-minded too, in a way, but full of experience in the methods of agents. He confided to Frankfort that a political revolution was impending over Brassville.

'What about ?' vaguely asked Frankfort.

‘Beer and water!’ was the brief and emphatic reply.

‘Beer and water?’

‘Just so—subject always to the Loan; all comes back to the Loan.’

Before he could go on to explain himself, he waved his hand gaily to a reverend gentleman who was passing, and exclaimed, ‘Ah, Mr. Keech, let me introduce you to a distinguished visitor from the Continent, Mr. Edward Fairlie Frankfort, nephew of our dear and respected banker.’

The Rev. Simon Keech was as popular in the pulpit at Brassville as Mr. Fairlie was in the banking parlour. He was a man in whom religious feelings mingled with public instincts. To all plans for helping the poor, however socialistic their tendency, he gave the light of his countenance for a part of the way,—and only withdrew it when they went too far, and became dangerous. He even extended this discrimination to the Hebrew Scriptures themselves; for while he preached eloquent discourses in praise of the vigorous denunciations of rich oppressors which they contain, he maintained that the Jewish institution of the Jubilee, with its remission of debts and recovery of properties, while admirable for the Jews three thousand years ago, was unsuited to the Christian now.

As both he and Frankfort were scholars, they readily found congenial topics for conversation, and Quiggle left them as they walked away down the street together. He gave ‘the stranger within the gates,’ as he styled his companion, much useful information upon social topics in Excelsior, and exhorted him to lead by his Sociological teaching ‘the people of our fair land right forward to the coming social reformation, second only to the great reformation of our religion itself.’

He was shaking hands with Frankfort where their ways parted, when he called out to some one who was passing rapidly down on the other side of the street—

‘Ah, Jacob, how are you? Hope you are quite well. Let me introduce——’ But the other person did not stop. He went on quicker than before, as he called out rather formally—

‘Thank you, sir; I am well, I thank you.’

All that Frankfort could recall of him was a pair of very keen dark eyes, and a grieved, dissatisfied expression of countenance as he looked round.

‘He does not care to stay,’ observed Frankfort. ‘Is he one of your——’

‘One of mine? No, he is a church to himself, is Jacob Shumate. Not a half bad fellow, either. Oh, you will know all about him, if you come down here often. He makes himself known to most men in time.’

But if Jacob Shumate was not disposed to stay and talk, he was the exception among the citizens of Brassville. By the time that Frankfort had walked down the main street he had met representative men of the different phases of public opinion among the people. These seemed all to centre round a few topics that appeared to fill the public mind—the merits or demerits of Meeks, chiefly the latter, the neglect by the Government of the public works of the Borough, the need of public works, and, above all, the prospects of the new Loan and the Reservoir. The Government and the politicians generally were discussed in a severe tone, but still as belonging to the people themselves, and being part of their arrangements for carrying on their public business.

Frankfort enjoyed these walks among the people of this prosperous little community, growing up amidst easy industrial conditions, and felt that they had been useful as giving him his first experience of the man in the street and his ideas in the new land. So far he had not seen much of the upper portions of the social pyramid, and in every community there must be some attempt at a social pyramid.

A few days later he found on the letter tray at the Bank a neat envelope, directed to him, whereon was a large crest of arms, enclosing a card containing certain information which by the custom of society constitutes an invitation to the person named to attend a festive gathering therein specified. It ran thus :

THE HON. MRS. LAMBORN.

At Home,

Wednesday, 13th Jan. 18—,

8.30 o'clock. Music.

R.S.V.P.

The Blocks.

On the top was scratched—

E. F. Frankfort, Esq.

‘Why, aunt,’ he exclaimed, as the family party sat down to lunch, ‘I’ve got an invitation from some one,—Wednesday next,—Mrs. Lambkin or some name like that.’

‘Oh yes, we’re going too. You’ll see all society there. Mrs. Lamborn is the head of society here,’ said Mrs. Fairlie.

‘Lamborn—yes, that’s the name—the Honourable Mrs. Lamborn. Is she connected with a titled family in any way?—the Honourable?’

‘Oh dear no,’ interposed his uncle, ‘she’s the wife of the Honourable Tom, our member in the Senate, the great landowner about here—The Blocks, grand property, got from Government in the early days for a song. Since then the town has sprung up almost in the middle of his estates.’

‘Quite a feudal baron,’ said Frankfort. ‘What sort of chieftain is he? Is he beloved by his people?’

‘Well, as to that,’ said the Banker, laughing, ‘one set of his people denounce him as a miscreant for owning so much land, and others regard him as an aristocrat for the same reason.’

‘But he is your Representative, you say,—some people must support him.’

‘Yes—in the Senate; he always manages to get nominated by the Government for this district, and he is entitled to it too. He is a fair specimen of our public men. In the early days he picked out the right country, and then he fought with difficulties like a man, risked his life among the natives, subdued the forest, won his land with rifle and axe. Many is the strong team of bullocks that he has driven through the bogs before the days of the metalled road, and now of the railway.’

‘So now he is your feudal lord?’ said Frankfort.

‘Only that he has no feudal duties, as you would call them. He has won his possessions, and in our days all

the baron has to do is to enjoy them—and some people object to his doing that, I can tell you,’ said the uncle.

‘Perhaps they would not have fought in the wilderness, though?’

‘Perhaps not. But as you are not standing for Brassville just now, my boy, you need not bother about him. The wife, of course, is charming, and so will the music be; if you like music, it will be worth going to. You want to meet people, and there you will meet the people at the top of society—the very top, the tip-top, in fact,’ the Banker said, with a quiet laugh.

‘Of course you’ll come,’ added Mrs. Fairlie—‘you’ll come to take me; it is not every day that one has a presentable nephew to show off, just from the old country—that alone will get you attention in the drawing-room—and a Professor too.’

Frankfort needed little pressing from his aunt to join their party in going to The Blocks. The easy and pleasant life at Brassville was a relief to him after the years of penury and struggle at home. He had not reached, indeed he had no opportunity of getting near, that stage of satiety that some young men in our time seem to arrive at—and to arrive at early in life—when they cannot take the trouble even to be amused. He looked forward to the evening at The Blocks with the pleasurable anticipation of a boy.

When Mr. and Mrs. Fairlie and Frankfort arrived at Mr. Lamborn’s mansion they were received in what Mrs. Lamborn called the green drawing-room—the white drawing-room being used for the larger gatherings that she gave twice a year, when she invited nearly everybody down, even to Mr. Woodall, the bookseller. Woodall did not directly serve behind the counter, but it was known that he used to sort the new books in the back of the shop as they arrived, so as to learn enough about them to be able to advise his customers what to read.

The Bank party was greeted in a warm way by the host, and with a more languid kindness by the hostess, who was dressed in a very effective manner and wore some striking diamonds, which his aunt afterwards told Frankfort were a portion of those worn by Mrs. Lamborn on her presentation

at Court during her last visit to England. He was introduced to a number of guests, who, he understood, represented the surrounding gentry, and was quickly interested in social topics with the ladies, or in attempts to converse with the gentlemen upon the public questions of the Province. But in the new world a musical evening is as little favourable to intellectual converse as it is in the old, and whenever Frankfort was getting interested in any topic, and anxious to follow it up, he was stopped by some beautiful Italian or German song, which unfortunately he lacked the necessary knowledge of music to appreciate. Still, he looked as interested as he could, and at the end of each performance tapped his hands together in that helpless way that people generally do in such a case, and muttered something that was understood to be an expression of pleasure. One song certainly did give him pleasure, a Scotch song that Miss Lamborn, the daughter of the house, sang. It was so delightful to him to hear the old familiar air again, and then the singer was herself so interesting. For Frankfort could not but own that she was interesting—at least for a girl.

Mrs. Lamborn considered Scotch songs to be scarcely good enough for good society; but Miss Lamborn and Frankfort effected an innovation this evening. It is, as all know, a hard achievement for a man to present the genuine appearance of pleasure in his countenance at what does not in fact please him; and the instinctive perception that women often have into men's feelings enables them quickly to discover all such false pretences; the more particularly if there is a substratum of mutual sympathy, in regard to the matter in hand, between the would-be deceiver and the fair detective.

'Did you like the "Wanderer's *Nachtlied*"?' Miss Lamborn asked him; 'Miss Corney sang it so well.'

'It was a fine song, certainly,' he replied, 'but I don't know that I have sufficient musical knowledge to fully appreciate it.'

'Perhaps you would rather have the Italian? It's so sweet, that "*O del mio dolce ardor*," when Mrs. Bussell sings it.'

'Beautiful, indeed; but the fact is I do not deserve to

hear such high-class productions ; my musical education has not gone beyond plain Scotch songs.'

'Why, then, you and I are agreed about songs,' she said simply, 'for I love Scotch songs.'

'Do you now? I'm so glad—do you sing yourself? Would you sing "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon"? The song is so beautiful, and it makes you think of the Doon itself, that lovely stream.'

'Yes, 'tis a pretty air, but the words are too gloomy to suit my taste. I'm not full of care, and my heart is not breaking, and the more the birds sing, the more I like it. Why should we make ourselves miserable over our music—artificially, you know?' she asked laughing. 'But I love Burns too, and I'll sing you "Evan Banks"—do you know it?'

'Oh surely; I've been there "Where Evan mingles with the Clyde," and the old air "Savourna Delish" is so beautiful. Do sing it.' And sing it she did, with that natural sympathy with the melody which excites, in a mesmeric manner, answering feelings in the hearers; so that the applause broke out simultaneously, this time in a natural manner, all round the room, and the company not only expressed thanks, but felt them. Mrs. Lamborn herself was really delighted at the evident success of her daughter, and she enjoyed the song too, more than she had the German or Italian airs; but she could not at the same time refrain from some depreciatory remarks upon this sudden descent from the classical to the common in the evening's harmony.

'But Eilly is so homely in her tastes, you know,' she said confidentially to Frankfort. To him the song was simply delightful; though to be sure it excited some sombre feelings, as he recalled the old scenes and the wide ocean now rolling between them and him.

Supper was served in the large dining-room; but, large as it was, there was only room for the ladies to sit down comfortably at the long table; so the men stood about, some attending to the ladies, and others congregated in little knots discussing the questions of the day. Frankfort soon became conscious of a marked divergence in the tone of this conversation from that which he had engaged in in the streets. There, while complaints were made of politicians

and of things that were wrong in political affairs, all spoke of politics as matters with which they were themselves identified, of which they were part, and which they had in their own hands. If they censured, they did so as a relative might complain of some family difficulty, which it was his affair to look after and if possible set right. The feeling of the street was—if politics are wrong we must mend them, for they are part of ourselves. Here, in the drawing-room, there seemed to be taken for granted a sense of aloofness from all politics, that was not explicitly declared, but seemed to be understood as a first principle—an attitude of orthodox indifference to all popular creeds, formulas, platforms, and projects whatever. The most important item of general news that had come in during the evening was that contained in alarming telegrams from the outlying districts which announced another outbreak of the Natives on the Border, and stated that, owing to the ineffective and bungling way in which the Border Rangers (as the State local force was called) had tried to meet them, several settlers had to fly from their homes, and one company of the force had got rather the worst of it in a skirmish with the dusky warriors, having been surprised in camp owing to the want of proper outposts being kept. Frankfort wanted to learn how such a disaster took place, but he got much the same reply all round—‘What can you expect from a force controlled by the politicians?’ Still, with all this contempt for politicians, and for politics as politics, he found, rising like two mountain peaks even in this altitude, the two topics with which he had already been made familiar by his converse with the people below—namely, emphatic condemnation of Meeks, joined to quite a vulgar anxiety about the proposed Loan and the prospects of Brassville in regard to it.

‘Why, ye see, the worst about old Meeks,’ said the Honourable Mr. Lamborn, speaking to Frankfort and a few others at the end of the room—‘the worst for us, anyway, is that he was not fired out years ago, at least before the last Loan.’

‘I heard something of that,’ Frankfort replied, ‘when I was going about the town the other day—something about Beer and Water—of course I did not know what it meant.’

'Oh, bother the Beer, that's the only popular cry, the fad of the Teetotallers ; though to be sure it will help to get him out. But the thing for the District is that the man's worked out—he's worked out, sir,' exclaimed the Senator, lifting up his eyes upon his visitor as if he were now imparting to him something really worth knowing.

'Getting old, is he?' asked Frankfort, so as to say something, as the whole subject of Meeks was rather a bore as well as a mystery to him. He had intended to ask his uncle about it on their way out to The Blocks, but it had escaped his memory.

'Old, sir?—why, not so much in years, but he is worn out in influence. Can't work up votes in the House—can't manage things—Government don't care for him, and so when he asks for his district he has to take NO for his answer, and the district goes without.'

'Why, if he'd been worth his salt, not to say his pay,' broke in Mr. Delane, the leading physician of the district, 'he'd have got us into the last Loan two years ago, and the Reservoir would have been finished by this.'

'The Reservoir?' inquired Frankfort, with an indifferent air.

'Yes, the grand Reservoir scheme for Brassville—establish our industries and productions—pure water too is so essential to health—the safe drink for the people. In fact, I ought to oppose the whole thing.' The Doctor laughed, as he took a glass of water, tempered by some of Mr. Lamborn's Scotch whisky.

'Then it depends on the members' activity whether a district gets these things, does it?' inquired Frankfort.

'Of course it does. How else?' returned our host. 'What's he for? But poor Meeks could do nothing—managed no votes. Theodore Bunker for Leadville, you see, as he could not get it for his district that turn at any rate, of course worked dead nuts against the Reservoir at all for that Loan ; so out we are.'

'Yet Meeks is not a bad beggar either. He begs with pertinacity, if not with skill,' remarked Mr. Hedger, the lawyer, who rather prided himself on the effective use of words, even out of court. 'He once begged a concession

from the Minister about some land for me, which I would not have begged for myself. He got it for me too.'

'He's not got us the Reservoir then,' emphatically retorted Mr. Lamborn. 'And what's the use of all his begging, if he does not back it up by joining forces with others. Our Premier, old Billy Brereton, I can tell you,' he continued, looking at Frankfort as being entitled, since he was a stranger, to this special information, 'he's been Premier too long to care about any man and his one vote. If at the right time you come to him with half-a-dozen safe votes, then he sees the merits of your claim right enough.'

'To be sure you can speak with the enemy in the gate if you have your quiver full,' interposed the Rev. Mr. Keech, who had felt at liberty to come this evening as there was to be no dancing, and who had just risen from the table, where he had been emboldened to sit down with some ladies, owing to the special deference due to his sacred calling. He had only imperfectly heard Mr. Lamborn's last remark; but he thought it right to add, 'You can speak with the enemy in the gate,—but to be sure you are not referring to—you don't mean to sanction the political practice of what I think is called, in the great Republic, log-rolling.'

'Only to get our rights, of course—obtain National works for the country,' the Senator replied rather doggedly. He added, as if musing to himself, 'And we'll have to look out sharp for next election and next Loan, or we will be out in the cold again. What can I do in the Senate? I can neither put the Government out nor keep them in. I'm not worth a tank, not to say a reservoir.'

'Meeks must go,' emphatically remarked old Thomas Hakes, a man of many acres, but few words.

'He must be hustled out straight,' said the Doctor in a demonstrative manner. 'Some may stick to him for the billets, but we can work it on the beer.'

'Yes, Meeks must be dispossessed,' remarked Mr. Hedger; 'yet he is not without adherents—friends who will stand by him; they don't defend him straight out, but their point is, how is he to live if you turn him off? They will try it on with Hawk Purrington and the *Scorcher*, as it won't go down with Siree and the *Trumpeter*. But I feel it

myself. He worked for me. I would not care to see him starve.'

'Oh, get him some billet—something light on the railways,—or I'll get him into the State Asylum !' exclaimed the Doctor.

'Who's to be put into the State Asylum, Mr. Frankfort?' asked Mrs. Lamborn, as she passed down the room on her return to the drawing-room.

'I understand it is your Member of Parliament,' he replied.

'Oh, that is the other man, I think,' remarked the hostess, laughing in a gentle and rather superior manner, 'a brother legislator of Mr. Lamborn. Well, all I care for is that Tom, or Mr. What's-his-name, or some one would get us our mid-day train again from Government. It's so inconvenient,' she added, lapsing into seriousness, 'if you're going to a dance in town, to have to go overnight, or else get up at that absurd hour in the morning.'

'They've taken off the mid-day train then, have they?' said Frankfort.'

'Why, of course they have,' Mrs. Lamborn replied, as if all the world must know of such a grievance—'of course they have. We had it for years, and then the Minister began to talk about the great loss on the railways, and the public revenue deficiency, and made some absurd calculation about the mid-day train from Brassville only carrying one passenger and a half, and ridiculous things like that, and stopped our train.'

Frankfort said that it must be unpleasant, and not having much more to say, asked at what hour the morning train went, as he accompanied his hostess back to the drawing-room.

'Why, at seven o'clock ; if you return to town by it you will have to get up at six o'clock. You don't like getting up at hours like that, do you, Mr. Frankfort? Eilly says that she doesn't mind ; but then she doesn't mind anything.'

'Well, in fact I've been used to getting up early ; it's a habit from my student days.'

'No, really?' inquired the Honourable Mrs. Lamborn ; adding, with rather a languid air, 'I thought it was only people with uneasy consciences that got up early, speculators

and adventurers and politicians, and that sort of people, don't you know.' And so they passed on to the piano, where some enthusiasts were already again enjoying the music, which in their hands had recovered its classical character; leaving the Senator still enlarging to his friends upon the inutility of Meeks and the grand prospects of Brassville from the new Loan. Shortly afterwards they all came back to the drawing-room, but some new element of dispute seemed to have entered into the discussion, for Mr. Lamborn exclaimed in a half-angry, contemptuous manner as they entered the room :

'No, sir, there is no difficulty there; the difficulty is about getting our share of it, with that Meeks, when it *is* floated!'

This was addressed, in a decisive manner, to Mr. Neal Nickerson, the headmaster of the Brassville Collegiate School, who had a disagreeable way of saying something critical and of a depreciatory character to anything that other people were eager about. He had got so much into this habit, in checking the exuberance of his boys, that at last it came quite naturally to him to correct in the same way any exaggerations when he thought that he discovered them in grown-up people. He was the very opposite to a sympathetic person. Just as the sympathetic person will say something in unison with your feelings, so he was sure to say something grating or disturbing to you. He was not very popular, therefore, in society, and a general murmur of satisfaction drowned some answer about catching your hare first that he attempted to make to the Senator.

'What an absurd fellow old Nick is,' remarked Mr. Hedger to the Doctor as they moved away, 'and yet you can't be angry with him, he's *so* absurd.'

'My dear sir,' answered Delane, who always assumed the air of the common-sense physician, 'these bookish men always *are* absurd.'

'Take care of that bad bit of road just outside the park gate,' said the host to Mr. Fairlie, as he courteously came out to hand Mrs. Fairlie into the buggy.

'Yes, it is bad,' answered the Banker; 'I wonder that you don't get the District Board to mend it up a bit.'

'Oh, we'll do it directly we get a little help. Five or six hundred would do it ; we'd find the rest ourselves. We'd have had it long ago if we had a good man in Parliament. Good-night.'

'Whom are they to get this help from ?' asked Frankfort, as they drove away.

'A small Government grant, he means ; but he might have done it long ago himself—just opposite his gate, too,' said the Banker with a laugh, 'only we respect the Government too much to leave them out of anything.'

'Yet I suppose,' said Frankfort, 'one of the feudal barons we spoke about at dinner would not have sent up to the King's Court at London for the money. It was all the other way then. But I have noticed much the same kind of feeling about all your people that I have met, high and low.'

'What feeling ?' asked his uncle.

'Why, politics here seems to come back to its original meaning, as we learnt at College—the business of looking after the affairs of a city, the city of Brassville,' answered Frankfort, with a touch of the professor in his reply.

'Well, you can't blame us,' said his uncle, 'for looking after our city. If we don't, who will ? But the people are often right upon great questions too, whenever a great question *does* come up—there's a great deal of latent sense in the people—I see it in the Bank parlour.'

'Oh, truly,' said Frankfort, with some enthusiasm, 'you are safe if you can get right on the people. The danger, I should think, would be of this localism obscuring their public feelings and developing politics into the art of people looking after themselves.'

'Well, come forth and teach us better things,' said the uncle.

'I should be proud to,' said the nephew, 'but it requires the people themselves to remedy popular defects.'

As they drove along reference was naturally made to the evening's entertainment and the people whom they had met.

'I hope you liked our Brassville high life,' said his aunt ; 'they are all really very kind, nice people.'

'Very pleasant indeed, and quite cordial to me though I was a stranger.'

‘How did you get on with Mrs. Lamborn? I saw that she talked a good deal with you.’

‘Ask him, Harriet,’ interposed Mr. Fairlie, ‘how he got on with Miss Lamborn and the Scotch songs. I suppose you thought yourself back again among the banks and braes. She certainly does sing sweetly.’

‘Oh, I like Miss Lamborn immensely, and the Scotch songs too, and Mrs. Lamborn was really very nice.’

‘So she is,’ said Mrs. Fairlie, who had in her no trace of ill-nature, but who nevertheless at times quietly indulged herself in a little refined, almost kindly sarcasm—‘so she is. Some call her affected, and say that she puts on airs, but that’s what they say of all who push themselves up in the world.’

‘Why, is she of humble origin, then?’ asked Frankfort.

‘Well, both he and she,’ answered his uncle, ‘are architects of their own fortunes. She is the better born of the two, whatever value may be in that. Her father was the village chemist and newspaper agent of Brassville, when it was a village. And bravely she stood by Lamborn in the past. “They clamb the hill together,” as your old Scotch song has it. Many a hard day’s work has she done in the old bygone times. But all the while she kept herself comely and spruce, and she was always very ambitious—more pushing, socially, than her Tom, though he had a good solid ambition of his own. So up they rose with the new country and the times; one venture after another of his succeeded, and now they are the leaders of our wealthy landed aristocrats—more wealthy than some of your aristocrats at home, though they are only Honourables by Act of Parliament.’

‘Well, and not a bad example of the aristocrats—the best people of an industrial community,’ said Frankfort. ‘But,’ he added, ‘Mrs. Lamborn seems to have a more refined air, a more cultivated style than one would have expected from what you say about her.’

‘Well, she was, as I say, in a way gentle born, and then quite a change came o’er the scene, at least as far as she was concerned, when they got up in the world. She travelled, brushed herself up, got presented at Court by the aid of the High Commissioner for the Province, and came back here

quite superior, as you say—even complaining of her native climate,’ added the Banker with his quiet laugh.

‘Well, she seemed to me quite a kind lady,’ said the nephew, ‘though, to be sure, I have not been much in society to see others.’

‘And so she is a kind lady, and if there is what your aunt speaks of, a little taking on of airs and so forth,’ his uncle added, ‘isn’t it quite natural in people who find themselves in only a few years raised from the ground to the top branch of the social tree?’

‘You could scarcely expect it to be otherwise,’ replied Frankfort, recalling some of his classical recollections, ‘unless Brassville was to be like the groves of the learned men of old, peopled by walking philosophers.’

‘Perhaps we’d have been just the same ourselves, Edward,’ Mrs. Fairlie interposed in her sensible manner, addressing her husband, ‘if we had risen right up to the top, and had big estates. But then,’ she added, with a slight natural touch of woman’s pride, ‘we have never been very high or very low.’

‘My dear girl,’ answered Mr. Fairlie, in the well-worn formula of pleasantry in such case made and provided for husbands, ‘if we had such large estates, I’d have been just as I am; but Mrs. Lamborn is nothing to what you’d have been when you were the lady of The Blocks.’

‘No, uncle,’ gallantly interposed the nephew, ‘aunt would have been like Miss Lamborn, and I am sure I never met a more unaffected person.’

‘Oh, every one likes Eilly Lamborn. She has both the common-sense of the father and the refinement, only more natural, of the mother,’ said Mrs. Fairlie.

‘And she is so natural, so unconscious of the effect she is producing,’ added Frankfort.

‘It is that Scotch song that has done for him, Harriet. You see what you are answerable for in bringing him to-night,’ said the Banker.

Frankfort protested that he was only speaking as one of the public. Any one else would say just the same.

But soon the pleasant holiday time at Brassville drew to a close. Not long after the evening at The Blocks, and

before Frankfort had time to see much more of the upper-class circle of the district, he received a letter from the Secretary to the Board of Overseers of the William Dorland University, asking when he would be prepared to undertake the duties of his Chair, and stating that the President would feel much obliged if he would call upon him when he came to town. The Honourable the President, the Secretary added, was anxious to make the acquaintance of one who would be the exponent of the truths and principles of Social Science, in which he took a deep personal interest himself. And in a few days, after a kind good-bye from aunt, uncle, and cousins, he journeyed to the capital in that early morning train that the Honourable Mrs. Lamborn had so much reprobated.

The William Dorland University was an expression of the time in which, and the people among whom, it flourished. As democracy develops, one of the first things to get democratised is Letters. Intellect, it is true, can never be equalised—it is eternally and essentially unequal in men; but the opportunities for learning may be, and must be, if the race is to improve. Also this intellect—imperial intellect—is quite indifferent to social rank and class distinctions, and in fact in our times is apt to be developed more among the many than among the few; partly because they are the many, and have therefore more chances in the lottery, and partly because the conditions of success, energy, and the power of hard work are more pronounced among them than among those who dwell at ease. They have a greater ambition to get up than the others have to keep up. Thus learning and the power of intellect become levellers, ever acting, of social conditions, and are popular with men as much for their power of levelling as for that of enlightening the race. For though we cannot secure that the mental capacity of all shall be equal, the passion for equality leads us to educate them as if they were so, and thus, instead of imitating, try to remedy the inequality of nature.

Having got so far, however, with general consent, some hard conditions of life present themselves. Labour is a great fact. Industrial work—tilling the churlish soil, exploring the mine, navigating the seas—dull toil in a

thousand shapes has still to be carried on, if we would live ; unless, indeed, we could revert to the conditions of a social life where, as in ancient times, there would be a servile race to do the work, leaving the citizens free to improve themselves and to govern the State. Till this can come about, labour is the ever-present heritage of the people—of the majority. No plans of taxation, or distribution, or nationalisation of property can ever relieve men from the curse, if it be a curse, of earning their bread in the sweat of their face. The many used to support the few. Men talk at times now as if the wealthy few could be made to support the many. It could only be for a day ; the many must support themselves. It is not to be denied that the earliest effect of the uprising of all into intellectual life is to create a disinclination to plain work—to labour, except in its higher and more interesting forms—and to set up a craving for employments that do not require mere hard manual toil. But soon experience teaches that a people cannot live, except by subduing the earth and directing the forces of Nature towards the production of what is needed by man. Hence arises among the intelligent and the far-seeing a desire to link school and college education with that practical work which so many must needs follow. No doubt universities for mental culture and research will still be required ; but we have also to dignify labour, as well as to make it more effective, by associating it with knowledge.

We see an example of this as far back as the year 1870 in the College which Sir Josiah Mason endowed at Birmingham at a cost of more than £200,000. In the foundation deed it was stated 'that the said Josiah Mason hereby declares that his intention in founding the College is to promote thorough education and instruction specially adapted to the practical, mechanical, and artistic requirements of the manufactures and industrial pursuits of the Midland district, to the exclusion of mere literary education and instruction.'

Thus the tendency is to make labour less a matter of brute toil and more the work of intelligently controlling and using the powers of Nature that science reveals to us. The number of those engaged in work requiring muscle decreases,

while that of those employed in work demanding skilled intelligence is ever growing. Further, it is found that a useful method for mental training itself is to be sought in the daily work of the skilled artificer. The mind is exercised by the manual labour which it inspires with intelligence, and to which it imparts its cunning.

The William Dorland University sought as one of its main purposes to dignify labour, to turn intellect on to it, to mingle and combine the training of hand and mind, to improve the hand by means of the mind and the mind by means of the hand. But it also maintained courses of study wholly for informing and disciplining the mind, and in the languages, though it rejected Greek, it retained Latin; the Honourable William Dorland being of opinion, with Bismarck, that the Russian language would be as valuable as the Greek for the purpose of exercising the mind, and at the same time more practically useful. This gentleman was himself a man who had laboured with his hands for bread. He was self-educated, and had a full share of that aptitude for acquiring knowledge, picking it up, as the phrase goes, and of adapting himself to fresh ideas and new situations, that self-educated men frequently have, and that highly educated men are sometimes wanting in. These, like some military men who have been drilled into exactness in their calling, at times want that spring and inventiveness which often distinguishes the self-taught soldier. William Dorland while still a young man joined to the plodding industry of the Hollander (for he was of Dutch descent) the enterprise of the American; and he pursued his ends with the same silent, at first unnoticed, but afterwards irresistible trend that the waters stealing through the dykes of his paternal land pursue until they have found their destined level. His attention was early in life turned towards silver-mining in Excelsior. At first his enterprise beggared him. He spent the whole of what he had saved from his earnings as a working miner in an attempt to develop quite new ground in the Great Boulder Dividing Range, at a point some miles beyond the township of Silveracre, which he maintained, for reasons that he could never clearly explain to others, would prove to contain absolute hills of ore, if only they were

penetrated in the right direction. His first venture having proved a failure, left him bankrupt in all but his own strength and energy ; so he at once returned to work as an ordinary hand in one of the established mines in the more settled parts of the district. He never lost heart for a moment. He lived on little, and saved the greater part of the liberal wage that skilled and steady miners could always command. A newer philosophy of our time rather sneers at this 'thrift'—indeed, denounces it as mean ; and it is not to be denied that it is often not unaccompanied by unamiable characteristics. Nevertheless, it is by the self-denial and enduring struggle of individuals towards an end that is intelligently chosen that the progress of the race is continued ; and when among any people these qualities are disparaged, and the natural inclination of most men to have an easy life is dignified into a policy, we may be sure that general stagnation is not many generations distant. William Dorland kept cheerfully at work, steadily saving more for a new venture, and all the while prosecuting at every spare time his inquiries as to the best manner in which to make the next attempt. When off his eight-hours shift of daily work, sometimes during the night, on Sundays and holidays, he would go out and do practical work in the gullies. He collected specimens from the strata at places where they were exposed or easily reached, and carefully explored the débris in the creeks running from the mountain side. He studied the reports and plans published by companies who were working in the adjacent leads, and made notes in the free library of Silveracre from all mining books and periodicals that gave any information that bore upon the problem which he was attempting to solve. But he chiefly relied on his own observations and the conclusions that his own experience as a miner led him to, and after over two years spent in investigation, during which he met with some failures in the results of his attempts to test the ground, and, we may be sure, disappointments many and various, he at last got together a mass of facts in support of his proposal to bore the hills in the direction, and not far from the point, that he had from the first indicated. Though a poor hand at explaining things clearly, he managed to interest Mr. Fairlie

in his venture, and the Banker induced the Directors of the Brassville branch of the Imperial Bank to 'take him up,' to speak in the language of the Bank parlour. It was rather a risk on his part, but he was known on both sides of the Divide for his liberal and sagacious dealing with all promising projects. So the necessary funds were advanced to Dorland, then plain William, an ample lease of country, then considered valueless, was got from the Government, the mountain side was this time thoroughly explored in the direction he wanted, mother earth was made to give forth her secrets, and true enough the precious ore was revealed, solid, in masses, 'hills of silver,' as the newspapers said. The common mining hand became a rich man, a great man, one of the Princes of the people, rolling in silver; when people spoke of him, they said that whatever he touched turned to silver. For now that he had money, dearly as he prized it, he was sagacious enough to know that its value lay in its use, and he wielded the power of the purse with growing experience and unremitting industry to open out new fields of wealth, until, as he reached middle life, he stood forth the lord of miles of leads of shining ore, the master of millions. Not a few envied him, disparaged him, or spoke half-despairingly, half-sneeringly of the power of 'luck.' Others denounced the social conditions which allowed one man thus 'to monopolise the gifts of Nature,' and possibly satisfied themselves that in doing so they were actuated only by reasons of public policy. They did not concern themselves with the consideration that, were it not for Dorland's enterprise and sagacity, Nature might still have been keeping her gifts to herself. 'It might have made a differ with some of 'em,' the successful man would say in the most unruffled manner, 'if they had found the Mine, not me.' But, generally, the public applauded William Dorland as a great Mining Pioneer, and recognised that but for his intelligence, determination, and ceaseless industry the famous Van-Dorland Mine—so called after an ancestor of his—would never have poured forth its treasures to enrich the Province.

Even his enemies could not deny that, when his prosperity was firmly established, he showed a broad public spirit in the use of his wealth, and that he formed large designs

and far-reaching plans for public objects, with much the same enterprise and confidence that he had exhibited in piercing the sides of the Boulder Dividing Range. If he himself and his fortunes were to the fore in many of these projects, why, truly, we may ask, could he be expected to leave himself quite out?

It was so with the University called after his name. His bounty established it, and he also gave time and attention to the business part of the management; and if it extended his influence in the community, and if, at least in the more practical departments, his personality made its weight felt in the management and even the tone of the teaching, could he be blamed for such a natural consequence? As to everyday politics, he did not join in them himself. You can make kings, though you do not wear a crown. Apart from his vast business concerns, and their relation to the Government, nothing engaged his attention more than the University. He took a real interest in it, even apart from the value it had for him in increasing his influence with the public. His desire was that, while teaching to some extent the arts and sciences, of which he knew little, it should more especially deal with practical matters, and rescue popular education from the reproach of being merely a bookish affair, which, instead of promoting industrial work, rather indisposed young men and women to it. And as for social and political science, he maintained that lectures at the University only fulfilled part of their function when they instructed youths in the knowledge of the text-books. Those subjects should be taught in what he termed a live manner, so as to spread the instruction through the young people to the public; and further, the University should endeavour by all other available methods to enlighten the outside people when great issues arose in which the principles of Economic science were concerned. For this reason, the Board of Overseers, of which he was the President and the guiding hand, had, as Mr. Fairlie had informed Frankfort when writing home to him, reserved to themselves the power to sanction the entrance into political life of the Professor of Sociology, on being satisfied that it would not interfere with the discharge of his duties to the University, or be otherwise hurtful to

that Institution. Of this, of course, they would be the judges. In this way the President hoped that the seat of learning might be the means of enforcing sound views upon the people. Which were they? Naturally those which he believed to be so.

The pervading principle, then, of the William Dorland University was to give knowledge a practical manifestation, and to dignify common things and the people concerned in them by lifting them as far as possible into the upper region of intellect. It was a striking exemplification of the democratising of mind ; the very antithesis of the old days, when the knowledge of the University was confined to the mental discipline of dead languages and logic ; and when anything practical was condemned as undignified. Men here were prepared for industrial pursuits, just as they were for the professions termed learned, upon the principle, and the very true principle, that intelligent training was as much required for the useful prosecution of the one as of the other. Marked attention was given to Agriculture, the course for Bachelor of Agriculture being extensive and thorough, dealing with the study of the natural properties of the soil, chemical and physical, and the various means of modifying its chemical composition and its physical conditions, such as by ploughing, manuring, subsoiling, draining, irrigating, burning, and by special methods of cultivation. The composition of the different manures were investigated—animal, vegetable, mineral, and farmyard manure—and the true methods, at once scientific and practical, for applying them ; also the various kinds of crops, cereals, leguminous plants, forage plants, industrial plants. The kindred industry of grazing and the management of stock was taught, including the veterinary surgeon's art and not omitting farriery. Instruction in the best kind of farm buildings, in tree and shrub culture, and in the proper keeping of farm accounts completed the course. But naturally among the practical subjects chief attention was given to Mining, as the University might be said to be the offspring of the Silver Mines, and indeed was still dependent upon them for a large part of its income. The curriculum for the degree of Master of Mining included instruction in the principles of geology,

also in topographical and mechanical engineering, mining chemistry, metallurgy, applied mechanics, together with practical training in mechanical and electrical machinery. But the most important feature in the teaching was the outdoor work that the students were required to undertake for some six weeks every year. Visits were made under the superintendence of their instructors to the leading mines (and particularly to the great Van-Dorland Mine); and work was done in company with gangs of working miners, in connection with shaft-sinking, drifting, stoping, timbering, underground haulage, hoisting, mine drainage and ventilation; while their attention was also directed to matters connected with the surface plant and machinery, mine buildings, and water supply. The students were divided into squads, and were placed under the direction of a foreman for practical work, while the University instructor attended to give the theoretical and scientific bearing of the facts. Sometimes, when the President happened to be at Silveracre during the students' visit to the Mines, he would accompany the party down the shaft and along the drives himself, and, clad in suitable miner's dress for the descent, he seemed like the old penniless, but still hard-working Bill Dorland again. On these occasions, his favourite form of solemn irony wherewith to rally the students was to ask them, if he had been able to do so much without any University degree, what must they not be able to achieve with it? Two years' study and the passing of examinations, that were practical quite as much as theoretical, were necessary to obtain the degree of Bachelor of Mining, while a third year's extended experience was required to secure the status of Master.

In the Mechanic arts about equal attention was given by the students to class-room work and shop work, which latter included pattern-making, moulding, casting, and forging. A novel feature in the William Dorland University was that, under its protection, in affiliated schools were given lessons, termed the Affiliated Schools Course, in cooking and dress-making for the instruction of young women, of which Mrs. Dorland was the patron, and in which she and the President took an active interest. Frankfort was rather amused by the particulars of these courses of instruction, which, though

not taught directly by the University, were not considered unfit to be prescribed under the shadow of its authority. The culinary syllabus was most complete, beginning with teaching how to boil potatoes and going on to all the perfection of confectionery ; while that for dressmaking began with hemming and darning, and went through working button-holes to all the intricacies of special work with the sewing machine. When his friends sometimes joked the President about his concern for these homely matters, he would reply, 'It's because ye don't take it rightly. The wife and I are thinking the while for the people—the poorer sort, ye know—and nothing helps them more, morality and all, than good food on the board and the wife pleasant and neatly dressed. A bit of steak like a piece of stewed leather, wife a sloven—end the Divorce Court ; or maybe divorce without the Court : husband clears out. Judge Harding the other day there talks of incompatibility of temper ; but what causes that ? Incompatibility of food and of person.'

In due time our Professor received his formal appointment, signed by the President on behalf of the Board of Overseers, and with it a polite request from that gentleman that he would favour him with an early call, so that they might talk over matters and become better acquainted with one another than they had had an opportunity of being during their formal business interviews. Frankfort did not delay in making the desired call. When he entered the first room of the suite, he found it not inappropriately furnished for an apartment in a seat of learning ; only that everything seemed to be so new. Before the President came in, he had an opportunity of looking round at the oaken bookcases. With their close-fitting glass doors and green leather edging, they were quite attractive to a man of his tastes ; though, to be sure, they were more spick and span than could be expected if they were more often resorted to ; while the books themselves, fresh and glittering in all the glory of gilt and morocco, looked as if they were distinctly connected with the plutocracy of literature. As being so, they seemed to have put away from them all poor shabby relations. There were among them no old soiled-looking folios of perhaps a high pedigree intellectually, but now presenting a dingy

appearance, as being in reduced circumstances ; no rare copies, or scarce early editions, useful as showing the alterations in later editions ; nor books round whose authorship dispute rages ; or others that are nothing in themselves, but of interest because men, otherwise great, wrote them ; none that were distinguished by the autograph of some notable man who once had owned them, or had notes on the margin showing the workings of the mind of some unknown student in the past upon the page that we are conning over, his personality lost for ever in oblivion, but his ideas still there to mingle with ours. The copies of the antique busts about the room were very pleasing, but rather fresh, and there were two noble heads, one of Shakespeare and the other of Milton, on the spacious mantelpiece on either side of the striking bust of the Honourable President himself. On the writing-table of polished oak there was a handsome desk, with a curiously-carved *escritoire*, a morocco-bound blotting-pad, extensive and spotless, and stacks of milk-white paper all impressed with the University crest, a soaring Eagle, with the Motto round the wings, 'Onward and Upward.' How unlike the dingy room and little deal desk in Scotland at which Frankfort used to toil through many an anxious night ! It seemed to him that it would be quite a pleasure to sit down and work away at such a table. A handsome vase, spotless and bright, stood near the *escritoire*, containing a brilliant bunch of camellias, which the Curator had sent from the University Gardens. He always kept the vase thus furnished with the flowers of the season on days when the President attended at his office.

The sound from the inner room of the emphatic stroke on the table bell, summoning the attendant to take a message to some department of the University, disturbed Frankfort's observations, and as he looked up the President, staid and deliberate in his aspect and carriage, walked in. His appearance was not out of keeping with his surroundings. He had a solid, Bank-director sort of aspect ; his originally reddish hair and beard were now a little tinged with a grayish hue, and with his blue eyes, somewhat dulled by care and years, he looked out upon you solemnly—nay, even with a tinge of sadness. You could not say that his aspect

was exactly that of a refined man, but there was an undoubted surface or veneer of, you might call it, culture, arising from many years passed in the exercise of high matters of business—an exercise that develops both mental power and the habit of self-restraint, and also the composed bearing of the outward man. In his manner he displayed that self-satisfied, almost superior, air which often belongs to the successful man of business, but which yet wants that native-born ease which attaches to birth and aristocratic surroundings, even with people who may be poor creatures enough in themselves.

‘Most pleased to see you and greet you, Professor—Mr. Frankfort—on your own account and also on your uncle’s. One of the soundest men we’ve got, sir. Friend of mine too, sir—indeed, I may say a friend in need.’ For the President was far too much a real man to forget his old friends, now that he had risen.

‘It is a pleasure to me, Mr. President,’ replied Frankfort, ‘to meet the founder of this noble Institution.’

‘Yes, sir, our Institution is certainly noble in its purposes ; and you have probably seen from our calendar there,’ said the President, pointing to a copy bound in leather and gilt that lay on his table, ‘how wide and practical our aims are.’ He added slowly, ‘Knowledge is power, the books say ; but it’s not so of itself, unless those who have it use it, and don’t keep it as something to be enjoyed by a few.’

‘Certainly all progress tends that way,’ answered Frankfort with ready sympathy. ‘It’s no use the few going on, if the mass are left behind ; in fact, they cannot go on, unless they take the others with them.’

‘That’s why we’ve been proud,’ said the President, ‘to have been among the first to practically recognise the new light that education has thrown on manual work, and, I may say too, manual work on education. We consider that when you apply mind to work you help to train the hand, certainly ; but we also consider that when you train the hand you help to train the mind. Teaching a boy how to make a cedar desk well, improves his mental power as well as his manual skill. If he makes the desk well,’ he added after a moment’s pause, ‘he’ll be better able to use it well afterwards.’

‘Undoubtedly skilful manual training is mental training up to a point,’ said Frankfort. ‘When you get to the higher branches of learning, mind can only brighten itself up by conflict with other minds. You cannot then help the mental process by practical work.’

‘But you would not class your own science, the Sociological, with these : the more practical it is made the better, to be sure.’

‘Certainly. Still, my function concerns only the imparting of knowledge ; men must afterwards apply this practically, as their judgment directs, in the outside life,’ replied our Professor.

‘True—very true,’ said the President. ‘Still, with regard to your science too, it stands true that the value of knowledge is to apply it to actions ; and how can you do that with social knowledge unless you make an impression on the public—outside the College as well as the inside.’

‘I hope that the truth of the principles of Social Science, as I will teach them, will expand from and through my scholars to the public outside. That’s the best way in which I can be practical, is it not ?’

‘To be sure,’ said the President, musing—‘to be sure. Yet yours is in itself such a practical science, and your message, so to speak, is so full of value to us all, we hope that there will be found ways for spreading your sound views outside the Academic Hall as well as inside.’

‘Yes, there is always the Press. One can publish Lectures, if the subject be not merely academical.’

‘True. And then no doubt you have minded the condition that the Overseers can sanction a Professor entering Parliament, when satisfied that such a course would be useful to the public—teaching the public, in fact.’

‘As to that, I have not fully considered it,’ said Frankfort, pausing a little in like manner even as the President himself ; ‘the functions of a Professor and of a Politician, though they may tend in the same direction, do not lie in the same plane.’

‘In what way ? I don’t follow you right out,’ said the President. ‘You put forth sound views in either place, Parliament or lecture-room.’

‘Yes, but the dual position needs some consideration.

As Professor one is bound to the University. As Representative his position is altered. His duty is to the country and what he judges to be best for it.'

'But ye would not say one thing in the one place and a different in the other?' gravely said the President.

'Of course not. Still, you see the distinction,' said Frankfort, rather interrupting the Honourable Mr. Dorland, as that gentleman slowly proceeded :

'Surely—surely ; yet we want to be practical in our Sociology, just as we are in our Mining, and to make our weight felt as a University in the social questions of the day.'

'But there is the difference. The Professor makes his weight felt by teaching truth to his classes, and trusting that it will filter outside. With the Representative the whole ground shifts : the public become his class, or rather, indeed, his master—in a sense, his teacher. I do not for a moment say that the two characters are irreconcilable ; only the question has not come sufficiently near to me practically to have made me think it out.' Thus Frankfort spoke on, getting interested in the distinction that he was drawing. When he looked up he found the solemn eye of the President had rested upon him, observing him with attention.

'Good sound doctrine, Professor,' he said quietly—'constitutional, I may say. Your uncle told me that you were a constitutional authority as well as the rest. Still, when the people need teaching, what I wanted to express was that the University should show the light of knowledge—hold up the torch, one may say. It can only do that through its Professors.'

'That, of course, would not apply to the party politics of the day.'

'Well, to be sure,' said the President, 'not to ordinary political business such as goes on daily, as you remark. I don't know that they are worth any man's attention. But great social questions now—that go to the foundations of the people's wellbeing and industrial life——'

'Such as would be taught from my Chair?' remarked Frankfort interrogatively.

'Well, yes, I suppose ye would include them,' said the

President, looking round the room slowly till his eye rested upon the three busts over the mantelpiece—‘I presume you would deal with them, the Currency question, the great Silver problem—Bi-metallism, you know, ratio of silver to gold—vital for us,—there we might tell. We might teach the people all the more, ye see, if we had a little political voice as well,’ he added, looking round on Frankfort again. ‘Truth is great, sir, and it will prevail—there’s Latin for that, I believe—but at times it wants a bit of pushing.’

Our Professor as yet knew nothing of the problems, alive or sleeping, that concerned *Excelsior*; but he instinctively felt that he was getting on delicate ground, so he merely replied in the tone that one assumes when closing a conversation:

‘As for me, my idea is for a man, whether Professor or Politician, to maintain whatever he believes to be true wherever he acts and whatever the subject.’

The Honourable Mr. Dorland looked up at him in a prompter manner than was usual with him, as if he were quite struck by his remark, and, grasping his hand, said with a warmth rather uncommon with him—

‘Give me your hand, Professor—give me your hand. Your views are not merely constitutional, I might call them morally sound—worthy to be your uncle’s nephew.’

They walked down to the University gate together and cordially parted, Frankfort declining, with many thanks, the President’s proposal to drive back to town in Mrs. Dorland’s handsome brougham, in which that lady had called at the University in order to bring the President home. In truth, he preferred the freedom and novelty of the electric trams, and as he hurried along to the city, he thought for a moment or two on the conversation that he had just had with the President; but only for a moment or two, for if that gentleman’s views were a little astray upon some points, his public objects appeared to be laudable. You could not expect a self-trained man, who never himself had the advantages of a University education, to fully enter into the sense of almost dignified isolation that belonged to the calling of the teacher of scientific truth.

Soon our Professor was established in his Chair, delivering lectures on Sociology, that were marked by considerable learning and much enthusiasm for his subject, to a bright class, mostly composed of young men, but which also contained several young women. Women in Excelsior had not yet been granted equal political power with men, as the political suffrage was still limited to the male sex ; but the advanced politicians were in favour of giving it, and of securing to women an absolute equality of political rights with men. Time was only needed to secure the victory. Several of the more energetic type of women attended the Lectures in Sociology, as a means of preparing themselves for the duties that they would afterwards have to discharge in the political world. Frankfort, who was an enthusiastic believer in the cause of Woman's Rights, and in the prospect of improvement for the whole race it opened out, used to experience an especial pleasure in the feeling that he was training and informing the minds of the women of the country as well as of the men—the future mothers as well as the fathers. And if they were to discharge equal political duties, it was only fair that they should have equal political training.

His experience as a teacher of young men and young women together bore out, he considered, women's claim to equal political rights with men. Though perhaps a few men stood out as the stronger students, yet, taking an average, the girls proved to be rather better book-learners than the men. Their perception was often quicker, their memory sharper ; while their habits were more regular, and therefore more adapted to steady study ; further, they were possessed by a keen ambition to vanquish the men, which the men on their part could not excite as regards the women. So far from the least difficulty arising from the young people being taught together, nothing could be better than the tone maintained, a good deal owing to the conduct of the women. Indeed, our Professor thought that he observed causes at work in all the mixed classes of the University which checked any tendency in a direction which *a priori* might have been thought natural between young men and young women brought thus closely together. Competitors are sometimes friends, but rarely so, when they are of

different sexes. Then the slow young men secretly chafed under the scholastic pre-eminence of the girls, which they felt was unnatural, but which yet they could not dispute. This made some of them, on the principle, perhaps, of the Sour Grapes fable, undervalue the practical worth for men of a course of training in which girls appeared to be more fitted to excel. The charm of personal attraction too in the other sex (hitherto such a powerful factor with boys) had not full scope for its healing purpose in the commonplace conditions of college classes; besides, there was that old adage about familiarity. But, teaching men or women, how delightful did he find his work! To seek truth only, to teach it alone, to place it high in the seat of honour, for all to worship! What could be nobler than to influence the young (how much was involved in even one life!), and, if not himself a ruler, to train those who would be rulers! It was the nearest approach to, perhaps the explanation of, Plato's saying that kings must be philosophers or philosophers kings. Yes, he was happy in his work, and was too busy to have leisure to feel homesick. To be sure, in his few idle hours he at times looked back with some longing to the old home in Scotland, the fond parents, the joyous walks with friends through glen or over mountain. And Myles Dillon, too, with his odd Irish ways, but heart so good.

He was musing upon such things one wet and idle Saturday afternoon, while he turned carelessly over the pages of the *Miranda Rising Sun*, when the name of his friend seemed to catch his eye, in the way that anything familiar to the mind attracts notice out of a mass of indifferent matter in the print. Sure enough it was the name of Myles Dillon and none other. He read '*Miranda City Hospital*.—At a Meeting of the Executive Committee held yesterday, the Honourable Mr. Dorland in the Chair, the long-delayed question of determining on the applications for the important position of Senior Resident Surgeon to the Hospital came up for determination. Ten Candidates had forwarded their papers, and after full consideration it was determined to appoint Myles Dillon, Esq., F.R.C.S.I. We understand that the gentleman chosen is a young Irish surgeon, who has had a brilliant career as a student and as a Resident Surgeon in

the old country. He belongs to the advanced school in Surgical Science, and will thus be well suited to Excelsior, where Progress is the motto from the bed of the patient to the bench of the legislator.'

So it was a fact after all: Myles was not joking when he said that he was thinking of a trip to the new world himself. How pleased he would be to meet his old friend! With all his perverse notions at times, he was such a pleasant companion, and took such an intelligent interest in questions outside his profession. So independent in his ideas, too; they were generally worth hearing, whether you agreed with them or not.

A few months later Myles himself arrived, and put up for a while with Frankfort in his comfortable lodgings, that were so different from the dingy, sky-high quarters in the old land. Hearty were their mutual greetings, welcome the long talks on spare evenings about old friends and the old landmarks of their Scottish walks, Bonnie Doon and Evan Banks.

One evening, as they chatted together in desultory fashion, enjoying their cigars, Frankfort musingly repeated some verses from Burns's song, 'On Evan Banks':

'Oh banks to me for ever dear,
Oh stream whose murmurs still I hear.
And she in simple beauty drest.'

He repeated them with feeling, but he did not mention that it was the singing of Eilly Lamborn that had awakened his sympathies and kept the memory of that spot so fresh in his mind. He became elevated in his tone as he spoke about this 'blest stream,' as the poet calls it. He broke out, as if to reassure himself, while appearing to exhort Myles, 'Never mind, Myles, we'll plant our influence here. That's a noble extract from Arnold that I read to you—you remember that day when we were talking of coming out. We'll succeed and make the new land succeed; as it rises we'll rise and gain distinction for it and ourselves; and if need be, we will lay our bones in its virgin soil.'

'Oh, I'm with you, Edward Fairlie,' said Myles, who was not unaccustomed to his friend's outbursts—'I'm with you as

to the success and distinction and all that. As to the bones, at present I've got flesh and blood to provide for. I can think of the bones when I'm done with the others,' he added with an excusable Irishism.

Soon after Myles Dillon was duly installed in his position at the City Hospital, and his brothers of the staff and the profession generally gave a dinner to celebrate the event. Frankfort was allowed, on the ground of special friendship with the guest, to be one of the company, and glad he was to see the way that his old companion was welcomed and the generous feeling towards him that was displayed even by those who might have been looked upon as his rivals. Mr. Singer, the leading surgeon in Miranda, as the evening wore on, and no one had lacked his equal share of that generous wine that doctors are so critical about with regard to others, proposed the new-comer's health, and though his skill lay more in the knife than in the tongue, he managed to express what he wanted to say. He cordially praised Dillon's distinguished collegiate career, and even got into a historical illustration the more fully to convey his feelings. 'Our guest comes a real—a genuine Goliath among the medical hosts of Excelsior.' Dillon, in replying, thanked them all cordially, but begged respectfully to disclaim the comparison of himself as the Giant of the Philistines to Mr. Singer's David. 'Unless, indeed,' he continued, 'my kind friend here is indulging in a little satire at my expense, as I am told is sometimes his way, and presuming all the time on your temporary ignorance of Biblical details; for, if you mind them, you will remember that while Goliath was the more pretentious of the two, David proved to be really the better man, and, in fact, in the end gave the other a nasty fall—injured him in the cranium.' The laugh at once brought up Mr. Singer, who had a difficulty in grasping any joke.

'I assure my esteemed friend and brother of the blade—I mean the knife—that nothing was further from my thoughts. I was only thinking, you know, of the common notion about Goliath—like a proverb that you pick up somehow. I know nothing of the particulars,' he added, with a decisive wave of the hand.

‘I accept my kind brother’s explanation cordially,’ said Dillon, looking very grave, ‘the more so on account of its inherent probability.’

Thus they enjoyed themselves, bantering one another, and after a while Singer did see through the joke; the last heard of it being his thanking Dillon for his advice, and assuring him that he would in future refresh his Biblical knowledge by going to the Sunday School instead of the Hospital on Sunday mornings.

Frankfort felt pleased at seeing his friend so well received, and at the good impression he made. The careers of these two young men had opened well in the new land, and they ought to have happy lives before them. For what is happiness? Surely it is found when a merciful Providence blesses men with the will and the capacity to do useful work in life, and then opens out to them the opportunity to do it.

CHAPTER IV

THE BRASSVILLE ELECTION

FOR some two years Frankfort continued his congenial College life and work, and his reputation as an enlightened expounder of Social Science began to spread. He came to be recognised as one whose opinion upon many public questions it would be worth having, and, as he was possessed of, or possessed by, the political temperament, he followed the course of public affairs with critical interest. But he had felt no desire to add to his delightful task of teaching social truths the labours and temptations of the politician's life. Fate, however, was busy weaving a new strand in the web of his destiny—or shall we say Providence? Whether we attribute it to Fate or (more wisely) to the direction of Providence, true it is that every now and then in our lives—at certain turning-points—several influences seem to conjoin, coming from diverse quarters, to bring about some result that has a determining influence upon our careers. Looking back upon these crises we can see the whole trend of the events—how they surrounded us and how they bore us on, and yet how little we seem to have to do with their direction ourselves! Events appear to fashion themselves and us with them. Even so it was with Frankfort.

The time fixed by law for the dissolution of the House of Representatives in Excelsior was approaching, and the Honourable William Brereton, the Premier, in view of the coming general election, put forth what was termed 'the Government programme,' the main feature in which was a generous system of National and Reproductive Works. This

chiefly dealt with a grand scheme of Water Supply and Distribution ; but it also included some extensions of the Public Tram lines and Railways of the Province. Inquiries about the prospects of a Loan for five millions sterling in London had already been commenced, so that the main features of the Government proposals, and the contemplated means for carrying them out, might be fully before the country, when it would be called upon to pronounce its verdict at the general election. Naturally, the greatest excitement was aroused throughout the whole Province, and especially in those districts that considered themselves entitled to be included in the projected system of National Works ; and what districts did not ? In Brassville the feeling was intense. There, too, it took the direction of a profound popular belief that the first and main step towards securing the Reservoir at the proper site near that town was to get rid of Mr. Ebenezer Meeks, their present Representative, who had allowed Mr. Theodore Bunker, Member for Leadville (aided by some unknown power behind), to outmanœuvre him and get this National work left out of the last Loan altogether. In fact, the Member for Leadville saw that he could not then secure the Reservoir for that town, and of course thought it better to delay it altogether than to have it put in the wrong place.

The Temperance League at Brassville also uttered a loud cry against their member because he had voted for the small Bill that was brought in during the last session to enable the liquor license for a back street Saloon that had been destroyed by a fire to be transferred to the spacious Empire Palace Hotel, one of the leading houses in the city, and which could not otherwise obtain a license. The *Brassville Trumpeter* was unsparing in its denunciation of Meeks. In fact, it had been so pronounced in its antagonism, that its own prestige would suffer heavily if he should be returned at the coming election. The *Brassville Scorchers*, while at present giving Meeks a dubious support, declared that Brassville being left out of the last Loan was a public disaster that could only be explained by the unscrupulous machinations of Theodore Bunker, and the dark power behind that backed up the artful faction at

Leadville. In an important leader it admitted that 'the only way for Mr. Ebenezer Meeks to be rehabilitated politically was for him to make it a *sine qua non* that the Reservoir at Brassville should be the first work to be taken in hand under the Loan now about to be floated on the English market.'

When the anti-Meeks party began to look about for a man to run against the sitting Member, Frankfort at once occurred to them. He was young, and that alone is a recommendation in democracies ; but, besides that, he was popular, and in Parliament would occupy a good position, and so would be, they considered, a more powerful advocate for them than Meeks ever could be. If any one would get them into the Loan, he would. The Honourable Mr. Lamborn, as a matter of etiquette, did not openly interfere against his brother-legislator Meeks, but privately he exhorted all men not to leave a pebble unturned in order to secure Frankfort. Miss Gazelle and her party were jubilant at the thought of getting a strong man to pit against the traitor, and the lady was especially pleased, as the Professor's views in favour of the emancipation of women were well known. Mr. Siree, the editor of the *Trumpeter*, feeling that he had a personal stake in the contest, wrote to Frankfort, urgently advising him to come forward, and in fact went so far as, before getting his answer, to put in a paragraph, commonly called 'a feeler,' which stated that 'it was rumoured that the distinguished Professor of Sociology in the William Dorland University contemplated wooing the sweet voices of the people of Brassville at the ensuing election.' The paragraph went on to say that, 'if this rumour should prove true, as we are shrewdly inclined to suspect it will, the people of this great and long-suffering constituency will at length have an opportunity of taking an emphatic, though tardy, vengeance for the rank treason and the unparalleled obliquities of the sitting Member.' It concluded sententiously, but significantly, with the statement 'Barkis is willin'.

The Rev. Mr. Keech, who was visiting the capital for the purpose of attending a Bible Conference, constituted himself into a deputation from Brassville to interview

Frankfort on the subject. He prefaced his remarks, when he called upon him, by saying that he never interfered in mere politics, but that in this instance the interests of morality were at stake.

‘Indeed, so bad as that?’ inquired Frankfort, who as yet had no definite knowledge of Brassville politics.

‘Truly, truly, my dear sir, I’m not hard against any man, but how can I tolerate Meeks either for Church or State?’

‘Why, what is so bad about him?’ inquired our Professor. He began to feel his curiosity about Meeks aroused.

‘What is so bad?’ responded Mr. Keech. ‘He has proved a broken reed. We were left out of the Loan; he made the liquor dealers to triumph, bungled away our effort to get payment for Bible teaching at the schools. How can we expect to get our rights with such a one—or the Reservoir?’ Mr. Keech added the last want, not going into any details about it, as a topic that all men must be familiar with. Frankfort thanked him, and said that in a few days he hoped to be able to let his friends at Brassville know of his intentions with regard to the important proposal made to him. He had to consider his own position, and also he must get the consent of the President and the Board of Overseers of the William Dorland University. When the reverend gentleman had left, the first thing that he did was to write to his uncle, Mr. Fairlie, informing him of what had taken place, and asking his advice in the matter. In a day or so he got this reply from the Banker:—

IMPERIAL BANK, BRASSVILLE BRANCH,
25th October 18—.

DEAR EDWARD—There can be no doubt that you would beat poor Meeks easily. He’s no good now; though not very old, he seems past his work. We’ve never got over being left out of the last Loan. People are afraid it may happen again with this one, and Gazelle and Co., not to mention our friend Keech, are implacable against him about some liquor grievance. So if you want to go into politics, now’s your time. I think it would be a good thing; it would give you influence, and some more income too. I’m sure Dorland and the Overseers would not object. If you determine to stand, you can’t get a better agent than little Quiggle, whom you

met here last time. He knows everything, and believes only as much as he ought to.—Your affectionate uncle,

ED. FAIRLIE.

P.S.—Of course you go hammer and tongs for the Reservoir.

E. F.

This note was highly satisfactory to our Professor as far as his prospects of success were concerned ; but the post-script set out definitely before him, straight in his path, a subject that he had been continually meeting with during his visit to Brassville, but hitherto only as a wayfarer meets some object with which he has no special concern, which he passes by on the other side, and thinks no more of. It was evident to him that he was now faced with this Reservoir question in quite a different way from that in which it had ever come before him previously. Even he, he himself, seemed now to have become concerned in this thing, and possibly concerned in it in a way vital to himself. Could it be that here, on the very threshold of the political career, his prospects of usefulness in public life depended on a Reservoir? All his knowledge, ability, aspirations, ideals, prospects mixed up in some way with this Reservoir? No! that was too absurd. Yet it was at least clear that he must now fully ascertain all the facts about this great Brassville work, and then see what the people there really wanted in regard to it.

The first thing, however, that he had to do was to see the Honourable Mr. Dorland, and ascertain if there would be any objection on the part of that gentleman and the other Overseers to his proposed candidature. The President readily made an appointment to meet him ; and again, as he sat in the reception-room, he had an opportunity of observing the highly respectable-looking books in all their wealthy environment. The busts, too, were there on the mantelshelf, and the milk-white paper, with the motto, 'Onward and Upward,' also the fresh flowers (this time red roses) in the piercingly clear water of the vase. The only new thing was a striking photograph, large size, of the President, taken recently by Ketch and Company, the great photographers of Miranda. Like many excellent photographs, its only fault was that it

was too real. It gave you the exact features, and the features in firm repose, without the suffusion of life that belongs to the living man. This living animation often mitigates the actual lines of the features—rather, perhaps, conceals them. Certainly in this portrait the President looked a harder man than he did when he spoke to you, and his gaze seemed to be more sternly fixed, and more looking through you and beyond you, than it was as Frankfort now beheld it, when he walked into the room and greeted him in a friendly way.

‘Ah, d’ye like it? The wife’s work, getting me done, and now she don’t fancy it. It’s a way they’ve got, women. She says it’s hard. I say, “Mrs. D., if it is hard, I’m hard. The sun can’t lie, you know.”’ He glanced at it with a satisfied look and a quiet laugh.

‘True,’ replied Frankfort, ‘but the sun sometimes cannot catch the expression, and it is the expression that clothes the features. But it is a good portrait—though, owing to a lack of expression, scarcely does justice, does it?’ He said this partly because it was quite true, and partly because he wanted to say something civil before coming to business. He was rather afraid that, as he had been only two years at work, the President and Board might raise some difficulties about his standing for Parliament, or that they might possibly seek to impose some conditions with regard to it; and he was resolved that he would either go in quite untrammelled or not go in at all. He was therefore a little surprised when the President received his proposal complacently enough, only stipulating that he must refer the question to the Board for their decision.

Like some other men, great and small, Mr. Dorland thoroughly understood the value of having some authority in the background, nominally a reality, but in truth only a name—a veritable Mrs. Harris, upon whom he could lay all delays, objections, conditions, and refusals whatsoever.

The President was familiar with this method of dealing with troublesome or delicate matters, or anything he wanted to think over. He bethought himself at once of it now in regard to Frankfort’s proposal. He would, he said, refer the whole question of his entering Parliament to the Board ;

and he added, 'When I've consulted them I can tell you better, Professor. The only possible difficulty is lest they may want some information, ye see——' The only thing the Professor could see was that the President was looking not at him, but at the bust on the mantelpiece—the bust between Shakespeare and Milton. In truth, he was anxious to get some idea of the political lines that Frankfort proposed to go upon, but he already knew enough of him to be aware of the delicate nature of any such inquiry ; and he was anxious to do nothing that might defeat the object that he always had in view, of securing in public affairs an exponent of political and social principles who would command weight, and whom he trusted would also be favourable to his own views upon certain great questions in which he was deeply interested. A mere common hack he could get easily enough, but he was much too intelligent a man not to know the value of character and moral weight in the legislature of Excelsior.

'Some of them might be asking, ye see,' he continued—'Jortin there, Alderman Jortin, he's strong upon the Silver question. Indeed, the University is concerned in it—our revenues, you know.'

'Then I'm afraid, Mr. President,' at once interposed Frankfort—'I'm afraid I misunderstand the position. I thought that the consent of the Overseers had reference only to the University—whether the duties of public life would interfere with my work here, not to how those duties would be performed as regards the public.'

'Most true—very true,' deliberately answered the President ; 'that's very much the view I take myself. I was only thinking of Jortin there, and how I'd answer him. It's rather awkward' (he pronounced it *akard*) 'not being able to answer questions when they're asked.'

'If they ought to be asked,' interjected Frankfort.

'It's this way,' continued the President slowly, not in the least ruffled by the remark, nor appearing to notice it much—'it's this way. Great social questions are looming ahead of us upon which, Jortin puts it, it is the duty of the University to make its weight felt as a teacher in the land—instruct the people by our outside influence as well as inside

teaching, ye see. He said it at the Board the other day, and Lawyer Keely agreed with him. I argued that our authority extended thus far'—drawing his finger across an imaginary line on the table — 'University bounds ; outside moral influence alone.'

'Well, Mr. President, all I can or could say is that if I do go into Parliament I hope to do my duty honestly to both the University and the country. That's my answer to Jortin, sir.' Frankfort spoke decisively. He added, in order to turn the conversation, and looking away from the President to his photograph, 'The only great question that I hear of coming up at Brassville, where I think of going, is the Reservoir, and certainly I don't know much about it.'

'It's a d—d job!' exclaimed the President, with a promptitude and warmth quite unusual with him — 'a political job.'

In fact, he had been surprised into this expression of his opinion by the sudden and unexpected way in which the subject had been, unintentionally as far as Frankfort was concerned, sprung upon him.

'Indeed—a job?' exclaimed our Professor, and as he looked round at the President from the portrait, he saw that all the hard lines of the face in the photograph were indeed in the original. The usual quiet, almost complacent air was for the moment gone.

'Yes, sir, a job—only a big one.'

'It should really be at Leadville, then?' innocently pursued our would-be politician.

By this time the President had recovered from the temporary shake to his equanimity. He had confidence in Frankfort's honesty and intelligence, and felt it would be unwise for him to enter into details ; so he only replied by repeating 'Leadville?' in an inquiring tone, and looking down to the shining polished table with a half-suppressed laugh.

'Where should it be, then?'

'If ye're to go into Parliament ye'll have to look into the matter yourself. Ye'll hear enough about it,' remarked Mr. Dorland.

Frankfort began to feel that he was realising the perplexities of the political career rather early in the race, and

was disinclined to pursue the matter further with the President ; as it was already plain to him that there were several conflicting interests woven round this Reservoir, and he felt that he could not tell where or how far they might reach. As he did not take up the conversation, the President went on :

‘Yes, yes, Mr. Professor, we needn’t trouble ourselves now about these details. If the Overseers will consent, and you do stand for Brassville, you’ll have to look it all up. In or out of Parliament, I’m sure that you’ll prove the truth of that line about the honest man being the noblest work of God. The Secretary will let you know the decision of the Overseers directly. You’ve not much time to lose if you are going.’

As a fact, the recollection of the Reservoir question made him anxious that the Professor should replace Meeks at Brassville. He felt deeply the value of an honest man,—on the right side.

Frankfort, when he had any difficulty to cogitate over, generally found that a quiet walk afforded a good opportunity for reflection ; so he resolved to walk back to his lodgings, in order that he might think over the questions that seemed to be looming up about him. From what he knew of the President, he had little doubt that he intended to advise the Overseers to give the required consent, and this advice he knew would determine the matter. But then if he did stand, what about this Reservoir for which he was to go ‘hammer and tongs,’ but which, according to the President, a highly practical man, was a mere job of the politicians. He certainly would not like to commence his political career with a big job. Far be that from thy servant. He had heard that a quarter of a million sterling was to be devoted, from the coming Loan of five millions, to the Reservoir in that part of the country. From what he had gathered at Brassville, he understood that the question of site lay between that town and Leadville, and plainly enough he could at once see that it was a vital question for them, which should secure the expenditure of that large sum and all the attendant advantages of the Reservoir. But now he learnt, from certainly a most competent authority, that it would be a job

—that is, a dishonest use of public money—to have it at either Brassville or Leadville ; so that in fact, if the country's interests were considered, it should be quite away somewhere else. If what he concluded from the President's words and manner was the correct view, why then this 'hammer and tongs' business was nothing but a misappropriation of public money—only the thing was to be done on a large scale. Still, he did not know but that the President himself might be prejudiced.

His way lay past the office of the *Miranda News Letter*, so he called in to have a talk with the editor, his friend, Arthur Hartpole. This gentleman and his paper belonged to that higher and larger class of editors and newspapers who maintain the usefulness and reputation of the institution of the Press. His first idea in starting the *News Letter* was to make it merely what its title indicated, a budget of news ; giving the public full information upon all topics, but leaving them to form their opinions for themselves, having no leading article columns at all, and not attaching the paper to any political party. He used to maintain that the first and great function of a newspaper was to tell all news truly, and that the more impartial an attitude it could maintain between contending factions, the more it was fitted to efficiently perform that function. He soon found, however, that men desired guidance, indeed needed it. Putting facts before people in their present state of advancement without comment and explanation was like giving the dish of food without the spoon. The real point was to have the spoon of sterling metal, and clean. The *News Letter* accordingly took its stand as an exponent of intelligent and common-sense politics ; and the editorial department, under Hartpole's direction, was distinguished both for its ability and its sound and also its high tone. He fought vigorously, but it was with the sword of the warrior, not the poisoned dagger of the assassin. He never perverted or suppressed facts when they made against his side, nor pursued private enmities under the guise of maintaining public principles. If truth was an obligation upon one man speaking to another, how much more was it so, he considered, when a man spoke to thousands, perhaps millions, of his fellow-men ? When he

condemned the conduct of a public man, he did not do so in such unmeasured terms as to induce the feeling in thoughtful observers that it was overdone; and he maintained that in this way his censures, when he did censure, were all the more formidable, as the public knew that they were neither vindictive nor reckless. 'If I blackguard decent men, what have I left for the rogues?' he used to say. The *News Letter* had a good circulation, and a fair measure of support from the general public; but it was the special organ of the more thoughtful people in all ranks, while the editor was the personal friend of most of the 'best people' in Excelsior, in the true sense of that much misused expression. He and Frankfort had been especially intimate, and they used often to enjoy a Saturday afternoon—the editor's afternoon—in talking over subjects either of a literary or a political character. So in this perplexity that was threatening him Frankfort felt that it would be rather a relief to talk over matters with his friend. It so happened that the editor was in his office.

'How do you do, Professor—how do you do? Salve, salve, sit down. I hope,' he continued, 'that the learned halls and academic shades are blooming?—don't mind criticising the metaphor. All's right, I hope?' he added, as he looked at him again and thought that certainly his friend seemed to be graver than usual.

'First-rate I am, but I am thinking of taking a rather serious step—in fact the plunge into——'

'Into matrimony!' exclaimed the editor. 'Why, I thought that you'd said and vowed by all the——'

'Not that—not that,' interrupted our Professor, 'not so bad as that,—I mean, not quite so serious. I am thinking of standing for Parliament at the general election—for Brassville.'

'Well, that's serious enough too,' said the editor—'serious enough for you. But you are just the sort of man we want to get in. If it suits you, it will suit us.'

'The political career is certainly a noble career,' Frankfort went on. 'It ought, at least, to be the noblest of all, as we've often said in our talks together about the prospects of the political art in our age.'

'Well, my friend, make it so.'

‘So I will—so I mean to ; but the fact is that at the very start I find myself stuck up, bothered, crossed by fate, to speak in tragic tones, by a humbugging, provoking sort of thing, and yet what’s not properly connected with politics at all.’

‘Ah well,’ answered the editor, feeling that he could easily surmise the trouble, ‘that’s just it. Of course, if Dorland and the Overseers make any difficulty, above all, if they attempt to impose any——’

‘Oh, that’s not it,’ promptly interposed Frankfort. ‘Old Dorland seems to be agreeable, and really fair enough about it, and you know he’s the Board.’

‘Well then, what’s the matter?’

‘It’s a confounded Reservoir,’ replied Frankfort, speaking in a deliberate tone, as he looked down and studied the well-worn patches and the traces of many footsteps on the editorial carpet. ‘I’m not a man for strong language, but I do feel so vexed with this thing, coming straight up athwart me as the great determining issue on the very threshold of my political career.’

Hartpole knew that his friend at times had an impulsive, enthusiastic way about him, and he was desirous of smoothing over any little difficulty that he, in his political inexperience, might be disposed to magnify into a positive obstacle, so he said :

‘A Reservoir? Well, what’s the matter with the Reservoir?’

‘Why, one of my best friends tells me that it’s the essential thing for me to go for, “hammer and tongs,” as he says. It’s the only thing he does mention—not a word about principles, beliefs, public interest—only this Reservoir.’

‘Well, go for it, then,’ calmly said the editor.

‘But another really practical man tells me it’s a nefarious job—and it’s a quarter-million job, too.’

‘As to that,’ replied the editor, a little stuck up himself now, but speaking with a jocular air, ‘you see, it’s our system. The constituencies drain away at Mother State, and the Representative is the suction-tube.’

‘And it’s a bad system,’ replied Frankfort. ‘Here I’ve been studying political subjects for years, and fitting myself

to deal intelligently with them. Now that I think of standing, from all I hear, the one sole question with the constituency is this Reservoir—and it's said to be a job.'

'I don't say that the system is good ; it may be faulty, like this world of ours. I have always tried to combat its excesses in the *News Letter*. But you'll never get on with any institutions unless you settle first how much bad in them you are prepared to accept.' The editor spoke this way, as he was afraid of Frankfort spoiling his chances by some high-flown ideas of inexperience. He added, 'Besides, my friend, in your indignation about this Reservoir, you've not yet answered my question : What's the matter with it ? What is wrong about it ? There is to be a big Loan for water-works ; they are needed for the country, and why should not your place get its Reservoir as well as the rest ? Don't you now make the mistake of being too straight, whatever you do. Do you know all the facts ?'

'No, I can't say that I do,' answered Frankfort, feeling the force of what Hartpole said. 'That's one reason why I looked in to see you. The practical man I spoke of as so positively saying it was a confounded job has certainly put me rather out of conceit with it.'

'Perhaps your practical man wants it somewhere for himself.'

'To be sure, that might be so,' our Professor reflected aloud.

'And you owe a duty to your constituents,' continued Hartpole.

'But not to get them public money by misrepresentation that they ought not to get. If elected, I am trustee for the whole country.'

'My dear sir,' said the editor, interrupting, 'we're at one on that point. I only don't want you to run away with an idea that in this case may be a mere prejudice. I repeat, how do you know that this Reservoir is wrong ?'

'Well, I looked in as I thought that you might tell me something about it. It's been before the public before, I think.'

'Yes, I remember something about it—but only indistinctly,' said Hartpole. 'There are such a number of these things ; and every district that does not get what it wants

out of each new Loan says that the others getting anything is a job—and, of course, a big one. But you can make out all about it. Nothing easier. You know Lavender?’

‘Secretary to the Water and Irrigation Bureau? Of course I do, I’ve seen a good deal of him. I first met him when he used to come up to the University arranging with Dorland about the Students’ Field parties.’

‘Go up then and have a talk with him. He’ll show you maps, plans, papers—the whole thing, and ten to one he’ll get old Blanksby, C.E., the Chief Engineer, to say something to you; that is to say, as much as he’ll say to any one,’ Hartpole added with a laugh. ‘And, as you know, though he don’t say much, what he does say is worth listening to. He knows what he is talking about, and every one can’t say that.’

‘That’s just what I will do. I would like to have a talk with Lavender, and to hear old Blanksby, too, as much as I can get out of him. He certainly does not waste his words. I remember,’ continued Frankfort, ‘when he came up about the syphon for the Elizabeth Dorland Lake in our Gardens. Mrs. Dorland tried to engage him in conversation, but it was not a success. His only reply to her questions was to ejaculate some figures, and if she wanted further information, to point to the levels in his plans. But he made it a complete job—the President swears by him.’

‘Does he swear by the President?’ asked Hartpole.

As time pressed, Frankfort wrote a note in the editor’s room to Herbert Lavender, Secretary to the Water and Irrigation Bureau, asking him when it would be convenient to see him. A friendly letter came the next morning; from Lavender, naming three o’clock that afternoon. The Secretary and he were no strangers to one another, and Lavender had liked what he had seen of the University Professor. Also, he wished to stand well with the University people, as he partly affected the character of a scientific man himself, and was, in fact, possessed of much cursory information upon sundry science topics of the day, such as the particulars of the photographs at the last solar eclipse, further reports about the irrigation lines in Mars, or some recent and wholly

unexpected information concerning the rival claims of Le Verrier and Adams to the discovery of Neptune. But these intellectual relaxations he never allowed to interfere with the most prompt and business-like discharge of his official and semi-political duties. He was a fair type of the class of non-political permanent heads of Departments, upon whose intelligence and honesty so much of the practical success of popular Government depends.

The exigencies of political life necessarily throw all sorts of men into all sorts of positions. Most of them mean to do what is best for their master, the people ; but very often they do not know how to do it. Nothing requires more intelligence and trained skill than to carry on the complex and often difficult affairs of daily administration effectually ; yet the political head of the Financial Department, or of a vast Public Works administration, while he must be a successful politician, need be, and often is, nothing more. He may be head of the Treasury, though he has never given a thought to the principles that underlie sound financial administration ; nay, though he does not even know enough to be aware that there are such principles. He may be called upon to govern a Railway system that represents the value of millions, without being aware of the difference between one gauge and another, or one safety-brake and another. He may have to direct the Water Supply of a community without having ever heard of the different methods of irrigation, or without being able to tell a hydrant from a syphon if he sees them. Calling a man a Finance Minister, or a Railway Commissioner, does not make him wiser upon those subjects than he was before, and the days of inspiration are over. If there were not, then, permanent heads to the various Departments of both ability and integrity, the community would soon have to pay the ample bill that ignorant dealing with special subjects entails. It will place popular rule at a disadvantage if the standard of permanent heads comes to be lowered ; for much of the practical success of Government depends upon these unnoticed pillars of the State.

Lavender was, as we have said, a fair representative of this important class, being intelligent, honest, acquainted with the facts in all matters in his Department, thoroughly

loyal to whatever party was in power, and, while always unreservedly advising his Chief in private, supporting in public whatever he did, and, not less important, ever keeping his own and the Minister's counsel.

The first person to greet Frankfort, as he walked up the long flight of steps leading to the Irrigation Bureau, was Crane, the head porter, commonly known as Wally Crane. It may seem to the reader to be a matter of no consequence who the head porter was ; but this is a mistake. Wally Crane was an important factor in the Irrigation Bureau of Excelsior. His appearance, manner, tone of voice, pronunciation of the language, and especially his deeply-deferential bow, cap (and that a small one) in hand, were all Irish of the Irish. Yet he never was in Ireland in his life. He was born in New Orleans, certainly of Irish parents, but who had long been settled there. He came to Excelsior when a young man, and naturally appeared as a policeman in a few months. His great diligence, joined to his complaisant manner, secured his advance in the public service, and in due time he was transferred to the Irrigation Bureau, and, after long years of faithful duty, became the head porter. In this position he managed to enlarge the importance and raise the value of the comparatively humble duties of his position very considerably. He was a widower, so he was always about the offices ; disappearing at times up a steep ladder into some attic, where he was understood to eat and sleep. At whatever hour, early or late, the Minister or Lavender came to the office, there he was ; just as if he could not breathe for long anywhere else except there or at the Parliament House. For when Parliament was sitting Wally used to leave the office to the care of the second porter and assiduously haunt the Lobbies, or creep into the Gallery (if something exciting was going forward in the House), ever ready to attend his Chief, or to hold Mr. Lavender's bag for him when he went into the Minister's room to give the Minister some necessary information. If the House sat all night, it did not in the least matter to Mr. Crane. He carried about him enough to sustain life, in the shape of slices of bread and butter done up in brown paper, and a small flask of something fluid ; and as the gray dawn

would be breaking upon the exhausted legislators, Wally Crane could be seen, by those who knew where to look for him, comfortably curled up in a corner, apparently asleep ; but alert to the least call from the Minister or to any premonitory symptoms that the House was about to rise.

He knew every member personally, but most deferentially ; and could give a capital opinion as to the prospects of re-election of each, but never gave it to any one except to his own Minister for the time being, in confidence, or to Mr. Lavender ; or to a select Sunday party of bachelors at his nephew Michael Crane's cottage, in Grubb Lane, down the city. He was quite familiar with all the plots, projects, intrigues, cabals, manœuvres, stratagems, negotiations, machinations, scandals, gossip, and rumours whatsoever that were going forward in the political world ; but kept the most profound silence concerning them except to Mr. Lavender, and to the Minister when the great man encouraged him to speak, or to the party in Grubb Lane. He was invaluable in the matter of receiving deputations : whether in giving Lavender an idea of their importance from a cursory view in the waiting-room, or reporting to him whether they would be likely to insist upon seeing the Minister, or could be put off by an interview with him, Lavender ; or in himself soothing their ruffled feelings in case of delay ; or in explaining away the Minister's absence, when he would fail to keep an appointment ; at the same time confidentially explaining to the disappointed deputationists that they would gain their object much better by seeing the Secretary, who, he would assure them, had the whole thing not merely at his finger ends, but in his hands. Whenever any one called on either Minister or Secretary upon business that was not specified, Walter Crane left no stone unturned to ascertain what they had called about, and generally succeeded in doing so ; except in strictly confidential matters, when he sketched out of his own consciousness the cause, and very often did so correctly.

The key-note to Crane's character was his absolute loyalty to the Irrigation Bureau and all that concerned it. He worshipped each new Minister as he arose ; and as for the Secretary, his devotion to him was unchanging. His

honesty was clear as the noonday. He would have died upon the floor ere he would have allowed an invader to carry off even an old pen from its precincts.

Lavender had told him to be on the look-out for Professor Frankfort, and though the Professor had on previous occasions called once or twice to see the Secretary, yet the special appointment for this visit, the coming election, and some rumours that Crane had seen in the papers, led him to attach especial interest to it.

'And how's yer Honour's health?' he asked as Frankfort came up, at the same time removing the small cap which he wore right at the back of his head (just as if he felt that he was not entitled to have a head-covering of a full, upstanding description), bowing low down, and looking quite pleased to see the visitor. 'An' who will yer Honour be seeing?'

'I want to see Mr. Lavender, please.'

'It's not His Excellency the Minister ye'd be after seeing?' queried Mr. Crane. He always styled the Minister 'His Excellency,' truly *ex necessitate rei*; for, as he was bound by his nature to address the Secretary and Members of Parliament as 'yer Honour,' and since there must be some distinction between such an exalted personage as the Minister and ordinary mortals, he had to devise some appropriate title for the former. He had asked his last question because he had some idea that Frankfort might be coming to see if he could get the Government support at the General Election, in which case he would, of course, want to see the Minister, not the Secretary.

'No, I only want to see Mr. Lavender. I think he expects me.'

'An' it's welcome yer Honour would be to either, surely, surely,' he said gently to himself. 'If yer Honour would just 'cuse me going before ye, I'll show ye straight into his room.' He was disappointed at the answer, as it seemed to show that, after all, he had only called about some ordinary business matter; so he resolved, for the sake of the quieting of doubts, to do a little necessary dusting in the Secretary's office, after he had ushered in the Professor. Lavender was quite accustomed to these special fits of zeal in favour of the furniture on the part of the head porter, and in fact rather

encouraged them, as sometimes he found the presence of such a keen observer of things useful.

Frankfort soon satisfied Mr. Crane's curiosity, as he had no desire to keep his business secret.

'How are you, Professor? Glad to see you. Nothing wrong with the syphon at the Elizabeth Dorland Lake, I hope?' said the Secretary. 'It would spoil the outlook from your Lecture rooms if it did go wrong.'

'No, I came about quite another matter,' answered Frankfort. 'The fact is, I am thinking of standing at the General Election that's coming on, and I'm told that an all-important matter, where I'm going, is the Brassville Reservoir.'

Here he was disturbed by a sort of involuntary exclamation that seemed to issue from the floor, near where Wally Crane was down upon his knees busily polishing the leg of a large cedar side-table. He looked round, and there was Crane polishing harder than ever; he had, in fact, got right down to the floor itself, in his anxiety to make a good job of it. To look at him, he seemed as if he had not uttered a word for a long time. But, unless the whole theory of causation is at fault, either he or the leg of the side-table must have produced the sound.

When, then, our would-be politician looked round, Crane was still polishing, in fact, going strong at the polishing; and Lavender, a little disturbed by the exclamation himself, and thinking that possibly his visitor would rather discuss the matter with him alone, said, 'That'll do, Crane. You need not wait; but let me know if the Minister is in, and if I can see him for a minute. Yes, Professor,' he continued, addressing his visitor, 'I can tell you all about it. It has been with us for years. I call it the Meeks' Freehold and Bunker's Reversion. But I'd just like to get the Minister's permission to give you all the facts—show you the papers, maps, and so on; so that if you do go down you will be well armed. You're for Brassville, I think you said?'

In a minute or so a low tap at the door announced Mr. Crane, who just looked half in, with his usual bow, and stated that His Excellency the Minister was in and would see His Honour the Secretary. When Lavender returned

he remarked, 'It's all right. The Minister is quite pleased that you are standing. So I can show you the whole thing. Just look at this tracing over here,' he continued, going to the side-table on the leg of which Crane had bestowed so much attention. 'Here you are. Brassville, Leadville along the coast side of the Divide; Silveracre on the other side, inland. You're for Brassville, are you not?'

'Yes, I think of standing for Brassville.'

'Well, there you are, that's the site of the Reservoir,' said the Secretary, making a mark with a very large blue pencil at a point on the tracing near that town.

'It is to be a big affair, is it not?' asked Frankfort. 'I understand it is expected to cost about a quarter of a million.'

'Well, yes, about that,' replied the Secretary. 'The Loan we are just going to float is to be for five millions—yes, it will be about a quarter of a million out of that.' He made a rapid calculation on a blank sheet with the blue pencil, and added, 'It might run into three hundred thousand; these things do stretch out so. It'll set up the Brassville people, if they get it; and you too, Professor. I should say that the seat would be yours for life.'

'But the site's disputed, is it not? I have heard a good authority say that it was.'

'Oh, of course,' interjected Lavender; 'of course it's disputed. But you said you were going for Brassville, didn't you?'

'Yes, and I am going for Brassville; but I want to understand the merits of the matter.'

'The merits?' queried the Secretary.

'Yes, the merits of the question of site. I want to know if the Reservoir ought to be put at the point there that you mark with your pencil. Is that the true and proper place to construct it?'

'The true and proper place?' repeated Lavender, looking rather pointedly at him.

'Yes, don't you see, Lavender, if I'm returned, I must think for the whole country as well as for Brassville; and I want to know, ought the Reservoir to be there in the general public interest?'

He spoke explicitly, as the Secretary, though generally very quick, seemed to be at some loss to understand his position.

'Why, then, perhaps you'd better go through the papers for yourself,' and the Secretary touched his bell. Directly the door opened a little way and Crane looked in at the door to see what was wanted.

'Just ask Mr. Twining to give you the file of papers of the Brassville Reservoir,' said the Secretary. And looking at Frankfort—'You'd better have the Leadville lot too, and what there is from Silveracre. You want all sides, you say?'

'Yes, please, I want all the papers on the subject.'

'Well, well, you hear, Crane; ask Mr. Twining for them all. You'll find them pretty voluminous; but, to be sure, there's a deal of repetition.'

Crane, lowering his head deferentially, disappeared on his errand, and soon returned, almost breathless, with two ponderous piles of papers—one marked 'Brassville' in red ink, and the other 'Leadville' in blue ink; while under both was a thin slip of documents marked on the first sheet, in pencil, 'Silveracre.'

'Put them on the side-table there for the Professor. Look over them quietly, Frankfort, you won't disturb me,' said Lavender. And Crane placed them down as he was told, only stopping to give one more polish to the shining leg of the table, and stealing, while doing so, an inquiring, half-perplexed look at the visitor.

The latter settled to his work with the trained aptitude of the student, and soon discovered that, though the two piles seemed so formidable, their substance was by no means equal to their bulk. There was, in fact, a striking similarity between the contents of the two. Each contained petitions for the Reservoir, estimates of cost and of revenue returns, highly favourable reports from divers persons signing C.E. after their names, long rows of statistics, and calculations of income from rating and income from revenue in distinct columns, requests for the receiving of deputations, appointments therefor, reports of proceedings thereat, memoranda as to separate interviews with the Minister or the Secretary, all interspersed with clippings from newspapers, containing

leading articles, long reports of meetings, letters from 'Indignant Patriot,' also 'Disgusted Patriot,' each demanding a National policy for their town, and proving that it would be rewarded by from six to seven per cent interest on the outlay.

The general conclusion to be gathered from each set of papers appeared also to be much the same. In either case, the Reservoir, at the spot that each contended for, was advocated upon the ground of its being an essentially National and obviously reproductive work, the primary cost of which belonged to the Public Treasury. Yet, as in both cases it was so clearly shown that the returns from the sale of the water would yield a handsome interest on the quarter of a million, it would seem to an observer that the districts concerned were making a mistake in not keeping such a profitable undertaking to themselves. The calculations as to the exact returns in cash from the Reservoir in each case filled long columns of figures, in some cases worked out to decimals; but in the result they were much the same. Those from Brassville showed four and a half per cent for direct interest, and one and a half per cent for sinking fund; while those from Leadville, made out upon a different plan, yet showed six and a quarter per cent for straight out interest, with no provision for a sinking fund.

Further, there were certain special claims which each district made to the Reservoir. It seemed that each had been distinctly promised that it should have the Reservoir, at one time or another, by different but competent political authorities, and that numbers of citizens had taken up land from the Government and begun farming and other operations upon the faith of the promise in each case. Further, it was averred by each that it would be impossible to continue to pay the State rent for the land unless the said State fulfilled its part of the contract and supplied the water that was necessary for the proper cultivation of the soil. Not only so, but the failure to construct this National work would lead (in each case) to the depopulation of each respective district, and to the people being driven to herd together in the overcrowded towns.

Thus, as to both Brassville and Leadville, the cases were

clear and well supported by figures for each. But what about Silveracre? Frankfort was struck by the limited and scrappy nature of the records relating to that centre; yet, as far as one could judge from these records, decisive action followed not long after the intervention of Silveracre. It was not easy to trace how, for in fact the papers were few from that important mining district. There were some returns, evidently prepared by a skilled hand, which spoke for themselves, and unless they were entirely fabricated, demonstrated that the Reservoir at either Brassville or Leadville could not pay one and a half per cent on the cost; while, if on the other side of the Divide, the return from the existing mines would be handsome, without at present calculating on the ever-growing expansion of the mining industry. There were no appointments for deputations, though there were one or two reports from the local paper of indignation meetings in the mining districts, at which leading mine managers proposed very strongly worded resolutions denouncing the claims of both Brassville and Leadville. There were also some memoranda, torn from the office scribbling tablet, fixing times for interviews between gentlemen known to the mining world and the Minister or the Secretary. As these scrappy memoranda thinned out to a close, the only thing noticed was a visit by the Minister to start the new engine works of the famous Van-Dorland Mine, near Silveracre. Finally, there was a telegram from him, dated from that township itself, to the Secretary, telling him to postpone the reception of a proposed deputation from Brassville for the present. The next thing that happened chronologically was the appearance of the Government Schedule of proposed works (under the last Loan floated), with the Reservoir, whether on the one side of the Dividing Range or the other, left out altogether.

When Frankfort turned round from his papers, Lavender asked him if he had got to the rights of the question now.

‘Really, it is not so easy to do that,’ he answered. ‘They both bring forward much the same facts and figures. And what about the Silveracre men? They seem to say little, but to do a lot. There are very few papers about them, only down the Minister goes and the thing seems done.’

‘Don’t you understand how that is?’ replied the Secretary, as he went on to explain it. ‘You see they are the great mine-owners there. They get up their facts carefully, and speak with weight. Of course they’re thinking of themselves—they want the Reservoir on their side of the Range. But then they do all quietly,—they want no fuss, no popular cry against the big mine-owners.’

‘And the Minister?’ queried Frankfort.

‘Well, the truth is, as you *will* have all the facts, he can’t but admit that they’re right as to it’s not being on the coast side—no one can doubt that—but it does not follow that he will put it where they want. And in any case he too wants no fuss on their part. He doesn’t want to appear to be mixed up with them in this matter. That’s the whole of it,—of course you don’t mind the common gossip about influence.’

‘Well, but what does the Department say to all this?’ persisted Frankfort. ‘Where, in fact, do the engineers say that this Reservoir should be?—that is what I want to get at.’

‘The Department! the engineers!’ exclaimed Lavender.

‘Yes, the simple question I want answered is, where in the public interest should this thing be?’ said Frankfort, trying to be as explicit as possible.

‘That’s not so simple a question as you seem to think,’ answered Lavender. ‘It depends upon many things, and is to be ultimately determined by the Minister and then by Parliament. I hope you’ll be there.’

‘Well, but surely your engineer-in-chief and your professional men have their opinion as to where it ought to be. What do they say?’

‘You’d like to have Blanksby’s opinion, would you? I fear it won’t help your cause much—you’re for Brassville, aren’t you?—but of course, if you like——’ The Secretary here touched the bell, and the alert Crane again insinuated his head at the door.

‘Just give the engineer-in-chief my compliments and say that I should be obliged if he would step in here for a few minutes. Say we won’t keep him long.’ ‘I know,’ he added, turning to Frankfort, ‘that he has to attend the

Minister at four o'clock. You've met him—you know his way. He doesn't say much, does he?—indeed, I've often to expand his ideas myself—but then he's so solid.'

Soon Mr. Blanksby, C.E., appeared, and solid he certainly seemed to be. On his large bald head even a phrenologist would have had a difficulty in saying where the intellectual lines terminated and the moral began. He also presented rather a battered appearance and a blurred countenance, probably the result of exposure to rough weather, and of hardships undergone in exploring the Ranges in the early days. He was solemn of aspect, slow of movement, few of words, and honest of purpose.

'Ah, Blanksby, here's the Professor; you've met before,' said Lavender. 'He's come to see you—not about the Elizabeth Dorland Lake this time. Fact is, he's thinking of standing at the election for Brassville, and the Minister says that we can give him all the information he asks for about the Reservoir. You're the man to make it all clear.'

Blanksby silently shook the Professor's hand, and looked down upon the tracing of the country on both sides of the Dividing Range with his large, heavy eyes. Of course, he could not answer questions till they were asked.

'Yes,' said Frankfort, after a slight pause, 'Lavender says that you can tell me all about it.'

'What?' inquired the engineer, partly looking round at Frankfort.

'About the Brassville Reservoir.'

'What, there?' said Blanksby, completing his look round at him.

'Why, the plain thing is,' resumed Frankfort, in a half-expostulating tone, 'where should this Reservoir be built? To begin with, should it be here?' and he marked the point with Lavender's blue pencil, near the town of Brassville.

'Na, na,' said Blanksby, with a slow shake of his head.

'Why, then—do you go for Leadville?'

'Nary a bit,' replied Blanksby, looking down fixedly at the tracing.

'Ah, I knew that, Frankfort,' broke in Lavender; 'Blanksby don't believe in having the Reservoir along the

coast side of the Range at all. The great interests of the country, he considers, require——'

'Well, but,' interposed Frankfort, becoming perplexed by what he had heard, and more anxious than ever to get at the true rights of the matter, 'does Mr. Blanksby go for Silveracre then?'

'Where?' asked the engineer, looking again upon the plan.

'There,' he replied, marking the spot with the blue pencil. 'In fact, Mr. Blanksby, if you could do just as you liked, would you put the Reservoir there?'

'Yes—if I owned the mines,' he answered, looking up, with a slight nod to Frankfort.

'Just so,' interposed Lavender, with a short cough, 'there's great force in what Blanksby says. It comes to this, if you spend a quarter of a million at Silveracre, you're really giving it to the great mine-owners. It's true, you assist mining, but mainly by swelling the pockets of the proprietors. There's great force, I certainly think, in what Blanksby says, that the man who builds the Reservoir there ought to own the mines.'

Our politician was getting rather distracted by the difficulties that seemed to be in the way of his quest for the true site of this Reservoir. Blanksby continued to look on the tracing unmoved. He had answered every question so far.

'But then, Mr. Blanksby,' said Frankfort decisively, 'where do you say that this Reservoir should be? Where is the true site—Nature's site, so to speak?'

'There,' answered the engineer, promptly grasping the blue pencil and marking a point in the Ranges about seventy miles beyond Silveracre. 'There—gathering ground'; and as he waved the pencil towards the Brassville and Leadville direction, taking in Silveracre in the flourish, he said 'Channels.'

He looked straight at Frankfort, to see if he fully understood the subject now.

'Of course we're only talking among ourselves now, and you wanted to know the real facts, you see, Frankfort,' interposed Lavender; 'but there is no doubt that the view

of the Department is that which Blanksby here puts so clearly. How can you get away from what he has said? First find what you truly call Nature's site, and what Blanksby equally truly describes as the gathering ground. First fill the bowl and then ladle away. First get your store of water, then distribute it. That, you see, is Blanksby's view. Secure your big supply first, then comes his conclusion—channels east, west, north, south, here and here and here. I confess, speaking for myself, I think that the way he puts it is unanswerable. But this is only between ourselves. You are for Brassville, to be sure.'

Here the gentle tap of Crane was heard at the door, the rather bald head was pushed in softly, and 'His Excellency the Minister wants His Honour Mr. Blanksby' was heard. 'Good-day till ye,' remarked the engineer, in one of his longest verbal efforts, as he disappeared slowly, Crane following behind, with a slight bowing motion as he walked.

'Well, I think you've got all the facts now, Frankfort,' remarked Lavender; 'and though you are for Brassville, still perhaps it's just as well to know the facts. Forewarned, forearmed, you know.'

'Yes, thank you very much; I think I know the situation now—and an awkward situation it is for me. Perhaps, though,' he continued slowly, 'if the matter was clearly explained to them, they'd be content with the channels. They would get the water all the same—perhaps better—fuller supply.'

'Yes, but what about the quarter of a million? However,' Lavender went on, slightly elevating his eyebrows, 'you wanted to know the whole case, and you've got it. You're for Brassville,' he continued cheerfully; 'every one puts their best foot foremost. You're for Brassville,—the coming man, I hope.'

As Frankfort walked down that long flight of stairs, he certainly felt that he was a wiser man upon one topic at least than when he walked up—perhaps a sadder man, too. He was rather absorbed in his reflections, when he suddenly became sensible of some soft movement behind him, and, looking round, beheld the assiduous Crane creeping down after him, respectfully attending him to the street.

'An' it's I that hope your Honour will be in Parliament for Brassville. Honourable Mr. Meeks very nice gentleman, but dreadful with that Reshavor, calling and waiting and comin' agin, and deputationing and interviews, and notes and scraps and wires and telephones; why, at times he might as well have shlept here, your Honour, as he threatened to do onst.' And Crane added, bending low in a parting obeisance, as they got to the end of the steps, 'An' my prayer is, that your Honour may get the Reshavor.'

'That's all right, Crane!' exclaimed Frankfort. 'So you want them to get the Reservoir too, do you?'

'Of course, your Honour,' replied Crane, stretching out his head after our politician as he stepped out on the pathway—'of course, your Honour, for then wouldn't we be quit of it?'

Thus it seemed that divers different interests were enlisted on the side of the Brassville Reservoir. The people of that town wanted it for the sake of having it in the right place, and for the sake of the quarter of a million; Frankfort was to want it for the sake of the seat in Parliament; and Crane wanted it put somewhere in order to get rid of a nuisance. Possibly the Minister and the Secretary might sympathise with the view of Mr. Crane.

Lavender had given Frankfort a copy of Blanksby's confidential report on the Reservoir, telling him that it was to be regarded as private. 'But you might like to consider it; though really it's nothing more than he has told you.'

When he got home he read the report, which was what the engineer had said, only put more fully and explicitly. He was evidently more at home with his pen than with his tongue. He showed that there was no true gathering ground on the coast side of the Divide for either Brassville or Leadville; that the estimates of revenue in either case were palpably unreliable; that there was neither population nor were there natural products to justify any such expenditure of the public money; and, finally, that all the legitimate needs of that side of the country could be met by a tunnel coming out at some point between the two competing towns.

The plot thus seemed to be thickening about our would-be politician. He felt that it would be impossible for him to consent to secure an entrance into public life by pledging himself to use his power as a representative of the country to secure what was obviously misappropriation of public money. What would be thought of a private trustee who dealt thus with his trust funds? Lavender's remark that it would secure the seat to him for life only brought it home to him as being something very like a personal embezzlement. On the other hand, how was he to get in without it? And might there not be similar perplexities in any other constituency? Was he, then, either to be debarred from political life or to enter it under conditions that would rob it of its usefulness? Truly a depressing alternative, a perplexing outlook! Where was the scope for the statesmanship for which he had been preparing himself? The essence of statesmanship was taking broad views of the interests of the whole people.

After due reflection, he determined to go on with his candidature for the present, and until he could for himself ascertain the real feelings of the people at Brassville. Especially did he feel bound to consult his uncle, Mr. Fairlie, to whom he was so much indebted, and who had shown him such continued kindness, before he should finally determine. Mr. Fairlie certainly could be relied upon to let him know truly what would be expected of him, if he stood for the constituency, with regard to this Reservoir.

In a day or two he received the formal consent of the Board of Overseers of the University to his standing for Parliament, accompanied by a complimentary note from the President himself, saying that both he and the Board 'were fully satisfied that Professor Frankfort would never, either in public or in private life, adopt any line of conduct that would reflect the slightest discredit either upon himself personally or upon the University in which he was such a distinguished teacher.' Though this laudatory strain bore no special reference to any particular matter, yet to Frankfort its high moral tone seemed to be quite reproachful to any possible temptation to palter away his principles on this Reservoir question. However, he wrote to Mr. Fairlie

to say that he would stand, published a short announcement of that fact to the electors, and, as his uncle had suggested, engaged the services of Mr. Louis Quiggle to manage the election on his behalf. That clever agent soon made the usual preparations : advertisements in, placards out ; meetings announced, with notification of further meetings to be thereafter specified ; committees arranged ; local celebrities interviewed and 'kept sweet,' as Quiggle somewhat enigmatically phrased it ; suitable paragraphs inserted in the local papers ; discussions of the pavement, on the merits of the candidate and the demerits of his opponent, warmly maintained by suitable emissaries ; canards contradicted—perhaps circulated. After he had spent nearly a week in this useful work, Quiggle wrote to his candidate to say that he had better not further delay his personal canvass, and proposed that he should come down by the following Friday morning's train, see some of the electors that afternoon and on Saturday, and then hold his opening meeting on the Monday evening. He added that he would be in Miranda himself on the Thursday, and would be happy to accompany him down to the constituency. 'It looks well,' he wrote, 'for the candidate to enter the constituency accompanied by his agent.'

Frankfort replied agreeing to his arrangements. He was not sorry to have his opening meeting on the Monday, as it so happened that Myles Dillon would be in Brassville on the Saturday, and would probably stay a day or two. He was going, commissioned by the Government, to perform a critical operation at the local Hospital upon a young bugler of the Border Rangers, a lad of seventeen, who had been badly wounded by the natives in a recent encounter with them, in which his troop took a prominent but not very successful part ; in fact, they had been caught napping, thrown into disorder, and another mishap had occurred not unlike that of which the report had come in during the musical evening at The Blocks to which Frankfort had gone with Mr. and Mrs. Fairlie shortly after his arrival in Excelsior.

Frankfort liked the idea of the friend of his college days attending his first political meeting ; for he looked forward to this meeting in any event. Whatever his pro-

spects of success might be, he hoped at any rate to hold his meeting, and to make a bold declaration of the true principles upon which a representative of the whole people should act. Perplexing as things looked, it was possible that such a bold declaration might succeed, and the people be willing to have the Reservoir at its true site and to be supplied by a tunnel through the Dividing Range, and so to escape the heavy rating that would be necessary to pay the five or six per cent on the quarter of a million that it would cost.

One evening Dillon and he talked over the matter after dinner at his rooms. Dillon had heard about his friend being a candidate at the coming election, and was doubtful if he would get in, and also a little doubtful if he would succeed in politics if he did get in. But the time for considering these views seemed to be past, as Frankfort had told him that he was resolved to stand. He had not mentioned the Reservoir difficulty even to him, as he had resolved to say nothing about it to any one till he had seen the Brassville people, and had an opportunity of going into the whole subject with Mr. Fairlie. So Myles, regarding the thing as fixed, could only relieve himself by some sage reflections on politics generally.

‘So you’re going this time, Edward, and no mistake,’ he mused, taking his evening stretch on the sofa.

‘Yes, try for it any way ; if not achieve success, do more—deserve it, Myles.’

‘Well, now,’ continued Dillon, musing aloud, ‘entering into marriage and into politics are the two great events of a man’s life. When he gets unsettled, he generally tries either. And they settle him, they do. And,’ he added, as if to himself, for his own information, ‘the latter has some advantages over the former.’

‘What’s that you say? What,’ asked Frankfort, as he settled himself in his evening chair, ‘has an advantage over what?’

‘Why, I say they are both serious affairs, matrimony and politics, but you can drop the one easier than the other, if it don’t suit you,’ replied Dillon.

‘What, drop politics easier than matrimony? Of course, every one knows that. I don’t see what you’re mixing up

the two things for. What has going into politics got to do with marriage?’

‘Oh, a deal,’ said Dillon emphatically; ‘politics are the best possible training for matrimony. Marriage, of course, is the *Grand Prix* in the race of life, but politics make a useful preliminary canter.’

‘How do you make that out?’ asked Frankfort, with a laugh.

‘Plain enough,’ solemnly responded Myles. ‘To begin with, there is the courtship of wife or electors—more said in each case than is positively intended. Then the politician gets accustomed to be contradicted, and not to answer back. This applies to the married man too. Also, you get into the way of not having your own way—no politician ever has, nor the other either. You cannot do only what you fancy yourself—consult somebody else—do what they want—do it smiling too. Further, if the thing you have to take up turns out wrong, the wise Parliament man never says, “I told you so.” No, he keeps quiet, makes the change, and lets the others think that they’re having their own way all the time.’

‘Any more words of wisdom, Myles?’

‘Well, furthermore, if a foolish thing is wanted the political man never denies it straight. He beats about the bush, tries to postpone it, and then——’

‘Well, what then?’

‘Well, then, perhaps after a while it settles itself, without his contradicting it.’

‘If there’s any sense in what you say, Dillon, it’s only another argument for the emancipation of women,’ said Frankfort, recurring to one of his favourite topics.

‘Why, it’s the only argument you’ve got for it,’ replied Dillon. ‘When women sit in Parliament, after being buffeted and contradicted all night in the House, what a haven the quiet home will seem, and the complaisant husband. They’ll love their homes then, I can tell you, and they’ll have reason too.’

‘All right, my noble Dillon,—does this complete your diagnosis?’

‘Not quite, Teddy; there is the important analogy of the children.’

‘The children?’

‘Yes, the children. Great rulers call the people their children, you know. You politicians have to work for them, humour them, put up with all waywardness—give your life up to them——’

‘Well, what has that got to do with it?’

‘Why, it is a question whether the children in either case have completely reciprocal ideas as to their obligations. At least, it is good training not to expect it—lest you should be disappointed.’

‘Ah well, for all your warnings, Myles, I will have a try at it.’

‘Very good. No objection on the part of Myles Dillon. One thing, at any rate, you will be able to speak from experience. Like the young man down west who said that he certainly would have been happier if he had not married, but then that he would never have known it.’

Notwithstanding this gloomy forecast of political life, Myles Dillon took a lively interest in his friend’s venture, and promised to stay over Monday so as to be able to attend his first meeting. He was to go down on the Saturday for his work at the Hospital, Frankfort going down on the previous day with his agent.

Accordingly in the Friday morning’s early train you might have seen our politician and his agent, Mr. Quiggle, rolling away on the main North-Western line towards the Great Gorge station, from which the branch line goes off to the coast, connecting Brassville, Leadville, and Tinville with the railway system of the Province. The railways belonged to the Government, and it was arranged that they were to be managed from the business point of view by the Director and an appropriate staff of officials; while, of course, the larger matters of policy were controlled by the political Minister. When a Democracy carries on an industrial undertaking, it cannot do so on mercantile lines; nor does it desire to do so. The State supplies the capital, so no profit is needed on the working of the concern. If there is a loss, is there not also the open public purse to make it good? Two powerful interests take care that things are managed for them in as liberal a manner as the State can

pay for. Firstly, the State employees, who constitute a powerful and widely-operating organisation, and are thus in a sense the masters of their master; and secondly, that portion of the public who do business with the Government industrial services, and who naturally insist upon having everything done for them as cheaply as possible. No difficulty arises so long as the public purse is full. A far-sighted prudence might preach economy; but in a Democracy the central authority often finds it hard to defy the power of organised interests and classes for the sake of the general but shadowy rights of the public at large.

The railway employees of Excelsior were, on the whole, a self-respecting if an independent and expensive body of men. If there were defects in the management and working, it was owing to the system, which left it mainly to a sense of public duty to ensure that efficiency which it has hitherto been found possible to secure in large bodies of men only by the weight of authority and the spur of competition.

'Yes, they are a fine lot of men,' said Frankfort, in reply to Quiggle's emphatic assertion of that fact. The agent spoke as he turned in from the carriage window, after a warm greeting with Hiram Brickwood, when they had stopped for a few minutes at a wayside station.

'That they are, sir,' he continued, as the train went on. 'That's Hiram. You know him, don't you—Hiram Brickwood? He's been down on a holiday, and he's coming up to take on the branch train from Great Gorge. He's right, he says, if you're right on the increments—the quinquennial increments, you know. I told him it was *all* right,' and the agent laughed the cheery laugh of the man of business who finds his business going on well.

'Somebody has got to pay for this all right, though,' said Frankfort, as the first simple idea about the increments.

'Bless you, sir, somebody don't object. Every now and then—bad times, the public squeal a bit; but, after all, good wages are the popular thing. And it won't do, by no means, to rile Hiram,' the agent added. 'Oh no, on no account at all,' he repeated in an undertone, as if for a hint to himself.

'He is an influential voter, then?' remarked Frankfort.

'Influential? My dear sir!' exclaimed Quiggle, striving

to explain by a clear illustration the true state of the case, 'let me first walk inside Hiram, and out I walk next with 150 votes in my breast coat pocket.'

'You don't mean that,' said the other in some surprise—
'150 votes?'

'I've done it, sir, done the trick, and I'll do it again. Oh no, Ebenezer is not going to get the trump this time. By no means, Meeks,' the agent added, as if he were addressing that gentleman in the distance.

'By the way, what sort of fellow is my enemy Meeks—I've heard something about him, but I've never met him yet?' asked Frankfort.

'Not a half-bad sort neither,' replied Quiggle, with an almost sympathetic air; 'but they're tired of him, and he damned himself comprehensively by not getting us our dam'; and the little man gave a slight laugh at his small joke.

'The Reservoir, you mean?' remarked Frankfort, feeling that this, for him, dark phantom was coming nearer to him than ever.

'Yes, the Reservoir, Brassville's hope, the morning star of her bright day—trade revived, industry rampant, wages doubled, property raised in value. But, Lord! I needn't tell you,' exclaimed the agent, with a graceful depreciation of his own powers—'I needn't tell you, you'll know how to put it, and to put it on too! Yes, poor Meeks,' he added half pathetically, 'he's done for—drowned in the Reservoir, squashed in the Beer, *felo-de-se* too, fatal act, attempts at resuscitation all in vain. *Sic transit*, as we used to say at school. I'm a bit of a scholar myself, Mr. Frankfort.'

'Ah yes, Mr. Quiggle, so it seems. But what are the facts about this Beer question? I remember you told me, when I met you at Brassville, that water and beer were the two great points.'

'Well, you know,' replied Quiggle in a deprecatory tone, 'there really ain't much in the Beer; but, bless you!' turning in his seat and looking earnestly at Frankfort, 'it's a capital cry. If he could escape drowning in the water, he'd be choked in the beer.'

'Why, how's that?'

'Well, ye see it's this way. Meeks has always belonged to the Liquor Prohibition lot—adores tea—bovril like champagne to him—don't know the taste of alcohol—blue ribbon as big as a saucer—woman's freedom—'lectoral rights and all complete. Well, what does he do? Why, when Carmody Zinck, M.H.R., brings in his little Bill to transfer the Liquor License from the Old Bark Hut, that was burnt down, to the Empire Palace Hotel, where was Meeks? Why, in the wrong paddock—boxed up with the goats. How? Wherefore? Well, they say, talked over by Carmody—fit of abstraction, perhaps. Meeks pliable, can't-say-no sort of man. There was, you know, really some sense in it after all. It was the only way the big hotel could get a license—no new ones allowed. But, my word, goodness gracious! *scan. mag.*, you should have heard them. Yes,' the agent continued, in a mild tone of voice, 'Hannah Gazelle and Co. do understand the force of the English language sometimes.'

'What, are they so angry at that?' inquired our candidate, somewhat surprised.

'Angry? My dear sir, they'd prefer the Prince of Darkness to Meeks now—they'd prefer you, sir. You see, it's this way,' the agent added, turning to Frankfort and holding up his hand, with fingers expanded—'it's this way. They went against it—party solid—private must march with his regiment north, south, east, west—theirs not to ask the reason why, etc. etc.—enemy they don't mind, but deserter—shoot him and eat him, and hope he won't disagree with you! And they ain't no different from other political parties, bless you!' mused the agent, in conclusion of his full explanation of the Meeks fall; 'they're all the same for that. They *have* to be, to keep up the strength of the regiment—no rapsallions.'

'How did Meeks get into it then? I suppose he has his reasons.'

'To say the truth,' replied Quiggle, first, from habit, giving a glance round, though he and Frankfort were the only people in the compartment—'to say the truth, between ourselves, I believe Meeks was just caught napping—never saw what was in it till too late—thought it didn't signify—anxious just then to oblige Carmody Zinck. Tremendous

pressure to get the thing through—Meeks, as I remarked, pliable chap—thought no one would notice—into the thing before he knew where he was.’

‘So that’s all,’ said Frankfort. ‘From the way Mr. Siree and some of the others spoke to me, I thought that there was some positive imputation against Meeks about it.’

‘And so there is, bless you! most plausible. Meeks poor—Empire Palace Hotel Company rich—must get license somehow—vote worth £50, close division, Meeks counted for the Noes, as matter of course. Why? Imputation? Plausible? Clear case, my dear sir. But, mind you, I’m not going to start it for our side, unless *in extremis*—*in extremis*, you observe. It’s bad policy to scalp a man if you can get him down without—and it ain’t fair,’ said the agent, murmuring this last moral sentiment in a meditative tone. He added, as he saw our politician eager to interpose some remark, ‘Of course, I can’t prevent others talking, you understand.’

‘I assure you, Mr. Quiggle,’ said Frankfort emphatically, ‘that, as far as I am concerned, I will say to the first person that asks me that I don’t believe a word of this Meeks—beer—scandal.’

The agent looked at him with some surprise, but only said, gently touching his elbow, ‘Good sentiment, Mr. Frankfort—the right thing too, if you were going for Meeks, and not for yourself. But, bless you, sir, we needn’t say nothing at all either way. Isn’t that simple?’

During the rest of the journey, till they arrived at Great Gorge, the time was occupied in conversation about the prospects of the election and the pouring forth of information by Quiggle upon many local topics and considerations. He assured Frankfort that he had everything in an advanced stage of preparation for the contest. The election posters in particular were carefully designed, and he thought would please him when he saw them. Brickwood would be right, so long as he was satisfied on the increment question; Miss Gazelle and Co. were safe in any case, and Seth Pride with them, owing to the Beer cry; while, in addition, Miss Gazelle was specially bound to Frankfort, owing to his advanced views on the Woman question. The *Trumpeter* would blow its loudest against Meeks; while the *Scorcher* was in such a

difficulty about the omission of the Reservoir from the last Loan (to say nothing of the Beer question) that it called for all the skill of its editor to tack a course of its own, so as not to be too much in the wake of the *Trumpeter*. 'So we're fair before the wind ourselves anyway—full sail, canvas stretched, stun-sails and all; the harder it blows, the quicker we go. Only keep her free, sir—keep her free.' Having summed up their prospects with this simple sea-piece illustration, the agent gave Frankfort one solemn word of advice, which was to pledge himself to nothing in personal conversation; but to make answer to all inquiries, that there was a great deal to be said upon the particular subject broached, and that he would fully deal with it at his meeting on the Monday. 'Keep her free, my dear sir—keep her free, easy before the wind,' he continued, loth to leave his marine figure of speech; 'breeze aft, easy ahead, free; then, you see, you can bring her up a point or two afterwards, or let her off a point or two. It all depends on the steering—and the sailing orders,' he mused in conclusion.

During the conversation little was said about the Reservoir more than the casual reference to it which the agent had made. Frankfort, as we know, had determined to keep his peace about it for the present. As for Quiggle, there was nothing new to be said about it, as far as he was concerned. He took it for granted, as Mr. Fairlie also had done, that Frankfort was going for it, hammer and tongs. Such a thing as a candidate for Brassville questioning the Reservoir had never entered his mind, and if any one had speculated upon such a possibility, Mr. Louis Quiggle would have considered his speculations to be of as practical a character as the inquiry whether it would rain this day next year or not. The feelings of the clergyman who is celebrating the office of holy matrimony, when he comes to the question, 'Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife?' would be hard to adequately express if the expectant bridegroom were to calmly reply, 'No, I will not.' Equally hard of rendering into language would be the feelings of Mr. Quiggle if his candidate at the Brassville election should, in the face of all the congregation, renounce the Reservoir.

In due time the train arrived at Great Gorge, where our

travellers left the main line and transferred themselves to the branch train for Brassville, of which Mr. Hiram Brickwood was the guard. While Quiggle was away arranging for some posters to be put in the guard's van, Frankfort walked about the platform, which was crowded by the passengers from various trains that arrived about the same time. A rather excited group of country people had surrounded the central figure of a gentleman, who appeared to be doing his best to meet and satisfy a number of expostulations that, in vulgar phrase, they were 'throwing at him.' And amid the din of puffing engines, slamming doors, bellowing porters, and rushing passengers Frankfort could not make out clearly what was passing between the eager disputants and the gentleman, who appeared to be on the defensive. From the snatches that he could glean of the controversy, it would seem that some deputation—for such they appeared to be—were remonstrating with the gentleman about something, while he was deprecating their complaints as well as he could. 'Seasons the like of this . . . Back rent . . . Guv'ment . . . When we took up . . . Average rain . . . Guv'ment tables . . . Rainfall . . . Not a drop . . . months . . . wet a muskeeter . . . Induced to take up . . . Notice to pay.' With phrases such as these hurling from the right of him and from the left, and from right before him, the gentleman appeared to be doing the best he could for himself. But all that could be heard from him was—'Government quite surprised . . . Really can't explain . . . weather extraordinary . . . report Government astronomer . . . quite beyond our control . . . assure you . . . postpone rents . . . surprised as much as you.'

Amid the din Frankfort caught sight of Quiggle, who had come up on the other side of the excited group, and just then the bell sounded, they hurried off to their train, and away they went, under the guardianship of Hiram Brickwood. As Hiram waved the signal to depart to the engine-driver, he included a friendly flourish to Frankfort, in apparent recognition of him as the right man in the right place; also an affable nod to Quiggle, who responded with a rather prolonged kiss of the hand.

'Chalk him up. He's a good asset. He'll boil down

for 150 at least—good coin, current on election day—into the ballot box—no light ones, neither—solid ring—in they go—paid down to date.’

‘Who, what coin?’ inquired Frankfort, who had only imperfectly heard his companion amid the jolting of the train upon the rough branch line, and was half wondering if the question of the cost of the election was now coming up.

‘I’m only saying that Hiram and Co. are all right for you, so long as you are all right for them.’

‘Well, I’ll meet them as far as I can; but of course I can’t pledge myself till I know all the facts,’ replied Frankfort.

‘No, but I can pledge you—get them right to begin with.’

‘By the way,’ interposed Frankfort, wishing to turn the conversation, ‘what was that crowd at Great Gorge on the platform about? They seemed to be pitching into the man in the middle—I could not well see him, surrounded by all those big fellows.’

‘Those chaps? They’re Crown Lands tenants; got up a platform deputation to the Minister of Lands as he was passing through.’

‘Why, what’s the matter?’

‘Oh, they’re blowing him up about the weather.’

‘About the weather!’ exclaimed Frankfort. ‘He certainly seemed to be apologising for something. But surely they don’t blame the Minister of Lands for the weather?’

‘Hush, my dear sir, you mustn’t talk that way. We’ve got some of that lot in our district—I should say about a hundred,’ answered the agent.

‘In our district or out,’ said our politician deliberately, ‘you don’t mean to say that we are to make the Government answerable for the weather.’

‘My dear Mr. Frankfort, we must really be careful. I don’t think that you quite see the point like,’ said Quiggle, sitting up straight and trying to be as explicit as possible, as he placed the forefinger of one hand in the middle of the palm of the other. ‘It’s this way, ye see. You and I want to take up land. Government proclaim this district for selection—splendid soil, excellent climate, rainfall so

many inches, decimal points duly certified Government astronomer—rent a song. Well, in we go, or on we go, you and I, clear, plough, sow, little capital used up—then up comes drought—no rain, blank inches, barely decimal points, atmosphere gone cranky it seems, Government astronomer out of it, clerk of weather won't recognise him, nohow. What's number two on the programme?' and he looked to Frankfort as if for answer.

'What's number two? I'm sure I don't know.'

'Number two? Polite circular from Minister of the Crown to you and me to pay half-year's rent. In the name of His Majesty the King, royal arms at the top, "due and owing," Act of Parliament, all right and in order—except the rain. What's third on the bill?' asked Quiggle, looking again at his candidate, and this time opening his eyes wide, as if the issue were now clear. 'What's third?'

'Well, what *is* third?'

'Why, of course, what you saw on the platform,' replied the agent. 'You and I, and Brown, Jones, and Robinson and Co. wait respectfully, but indignantly, on the Honourable the Minister. "Pay the Government rent," says he. "Certainly," say we, "if we get the Government rain. Give us the rain and we'll give you the rent." Minister says, "Where is the rent?" We say, "Where is the rain?" The rent, like the rain, is *non est*. He asks, "Where is your banker?" We ask, "Where is your astronomer?" "Where is your cash ledger?" says he. "Where are your weather tables?" say we. And,' continued the agent, as Frankfort looked half amused at his explanation, 'ain't we right? Where can we get the rent except from the ground? And how is it to come from the ground unless we get the rain as the Government astronomer promised? Can we get cheques in the air? Not till he gets moisture there. Oh no, there's reason in everything, even in the boiling of potatoes,' again mused the agent.

'But really I can't see still——' began Frankfort.

'Good sir,' interposed Mr. Quiggle, 'surely you don't say that men, citizens, electors—men who vote, please observe—are to pay for the land if they don't make out of it? And how's it to be done? Where's it to come from?'

Highlander and his breeks—old story—great truth. My dear sir,' he continued earnestly, 'you'll have to be careful about some points. Why, there's a good hundred of Crown tenants in our side of the country.'

'True enough, the rent must come out of the land,' said Frankfort. Then, changing the subject, he asked, 'Are they much interested in this currency—silver—question? of which I have heard something. I suppose they are likely to ask one's creed upon it?'

'The Currency question? You needn't bother about that, sir. Our interest in the currency centres in the two fifty thousand out of the five million Loan. If they give us the Reservoir——'

Here the whistle from the engine announced that they were coming to some station. Frankfort inquired where they were.

'This is old Mother Dole's, near the top of the Divide. Stop at her hut for a few minutes. Be sure you take a cup of her coffee,' advised the agent; 'though she can't vote herself, she makes the others vote, and as she tells them too.'

'Really, is she so much thought of as that?'

'Thought of? she makes them think of her,' answered Quiggle. 'Oh, she's lots of go—she ought to have been a man, she ought.'

The train here came to a standstill for a while, as it seemed there were some trucks to move on before it could come up. So Frankfort sought, while they waited, to learn more about Mother Dole.

'What is she, then? What is her history?'

'Why, what's any one's history?' asked Quiggle in return. 'Who can tell? She says herself that the earliest thing she remembers is the Duke of Cambridge asking how old she was, sixty years ago, when he visited the charity school where she was brought up in Canterbury. "Says he," says she, "'Well, my little girl, and how old are you?' 'Mary Dole is just nine, may it please your Royal Highness,' answers the Matron. Those were his very words," says she. I've never got much further with her history myself—but I can tell you it's quite a feather in her cap still. They all

look up to her, democratic as we are—and it isn't every one that a Royal Duke asks their age of, is it?'

'Certainly not. We are to take her coffee then?'

'Bless you, you know you needn't drink it. Just take it, and when you saunter round the hut you can drop it behind a gin case as you sit down. You'd soon be floored electioneering if you took in all you take up. Why,' continued Quiggle cheerfully, falling back in his seat, and at the same time recalling one of his large stock of electioneering stories to fill up the few minutes while they were kept at a standstill—'why, when I was running Smirke for the Silvertop district, away at the end of the electorate, up in the Ranges, at Rowdy Vale, I got in with a real hard-drinking lot—bound to keep them right—couldn't refuse to join in—glass after glass—such whisky too. What did I do?'

'I suppose what you advise me to do.'

'Just that; nobbler after nobbler—shout after shout. Gordon—Fancy Gordon they called him—he was wild and rough as a buffalo—wanted to do me as he was rather against Smirke—he didn't know why—look or something. So he plied away at me. I took it all smiling, and quietly dropped it about the clay floor of the shanty, and was fresh and ready every new round. At last says he, looking at me rather admiring like—

"Well, Quiggle, you have a head—and for a mere colt like you! I'll say that for you, you have a head."

"Yes, Mr. Gordon," says I, "I have a fair head."

"Blest if I don't vote for Smirke," says he, "if he's a patch on you." "Quite as good a head as me, Mr. Gordon," says I, "in fact, rather better. He'll do you credit. He'll be worthy of Rowdy Vale. Smirke and I have good heads," I added to myself quietly, "but not as you mean, old Buffalo."

'So you managed them?' said Frankfort.

'Yes, I took them in, not the liquor,' laughed the little man. 'And, would you believe it,' he continued quite solemnly. 'Fancy Gordon and the whole lot went first thing the next day, just after morning nip, and voted straight for Smirke? They knew nothing really about the election, you see; and it was only as they were going back down the road that

they learnt that Smirke was a Rechabite. My word, you should have seen them! Fancy Gordon wanted to go back and break open the ballot-box—only to get his own vote out, he said, “he didn’t oughter to interfere with no one else.” But Dowdy Tom told him it wouldn’t be constitutional. I had to keep out of the way, I can tell you,’ concluded the agent, with a significant nod at his companion.

By the time this instructive illustration of electioneering tactics had been finished, the line had been cleared, and the train had drawn up at a rude station opposite Mother Dole’s hut, which was only a few chains away.

Mother Dole stood at the rough bench in her shanty, ready to serve out the coffee. She was aged but strong, evidently full of force and vigour, her garments, though plain and bush-like, neat and clean, her voice manly, her manner decisive. She seemed to govern in an absolute style not only a couple of girls who were busy preparing the coffee, but a circle of lounging lanky men and boys who had come up to see the train come in (the event of the day) and to hear the news. Though seemingly out of the world here amongst the mountains, Mother Dole got the papers regularly, and read them too each evening; and moreover formed upon the information thus obtained certain independent opinions of her own. The railways, branching right through a country, penetrating daily to the wildest and most distant places, freighted with newspapers containing the latest information and the newest ideas, borne from all the centres of civilisation in the great world, produce a community of intelligence between even the most distant settlements and the busy haunts of men in the great cities.

‘Ah, Madam Dole, here is our new Member, as I may call him, come up to ask your influence and have a cup of your lovely coffee,’ cheerfully exclaimed the agent as they walked into the shanty.

‘Glad to see ye, Mr. Quiggle; and the same to ye, Mr. Franker. Meeks is gone lame, foundered like, no more go in him—griped too, I guess,’ said the gruff voice; and it added in still gruffer tones, ‘Kitty, sharp with that coffee there. Mr. Brickwood’s not goin’ to spend the day here to oblige you—nor the afternoon neither.’ Great respect was

paid by all the population to Government officials, and even Mother Dole rendered reverence to so important a personage as the senior guard on the line.

'Ah, thank you, Mrs. Dole; this is your own coffee, just the thing for a cold day. And our new Member is just the man for you,' remarked Quiggle, grasping in his hand a large cup of dark substance, known in the Ranges as coffee, and stirring it vigorously with a worn-out spoon of some dark metal. He had not tasted the coffee yet, but was moving towards the door, ostensibly to interview some of the electors who were standing there. As he did so, he continued speaking, 'Yes, Mrs. Dole, our new Member is just the man for you. He's for Woman's Rights, and for everything else that's right. Ah, Ben, and how are you? How is Mr. Benjamin?' and the agent seated himself on an empty cask at the end of the hut where Ben was.

'You're for Woman's Rights, are ye, and votin' away and a' that!' exclaimed Mother Dole, looking at Frankfort, as he leaned on the pine-board bench, stirring his coffee. She leaned too, only more heavily and squarely, upon her side of the counter. Her voice seemed to be more deep and massive than ever.

'Certainly, Mrs. Dole,' he replied. 'Join men and women together in the work of life—strong pull—all together. I hope you think with——'

'Yes, I do think, and I'll tell you what I think,' said Mother Dole, bearing down upon Frankfort solidly with her strong hazel eyes. 'If I've got to get my dray along the bog road there, I put a team of bullocks till it. If I mixed them half heifers and half steers, the dray would get stuck there—well,' continued Mrs. Dole, looking round triumphantly upon the lanky youths, who appeared to follow her words with deep attention—'stuck there, well—till I'd begun to say my prayers. By that sign,' she added, turning to our politician, 'I hope ye'll be getting us a bit of money from Guv'ment for that same road.'

'But really, Mrs. Dole,' urged Frankfort, still stirring his mixture with one of the worn-out dark spoons, 'unless you accustom women to exercise their full rights, how can you expect them to work with us in——'

'Work—expect them to work,' indignantly interposed Mrs. Dole; 'I wish ye would expect them to work and learn them to work too. It's as much as I'm strong for, to get these girls out of bed of a mornin', and what's their work of an afternoon? Stickin' bits of ribbon in their heads and starin' about at the passengers—but that don't wash the clothes, nor boil the pumpkins neither.' Here the lanky youths grinned in approval of Mrs. Dole's sentiments; but that lady, who was severe on the girls herself, was too much of a man to join with the boys against them. So she turned somewhat fiercely upon the latter. 'An' what are ye grinnin' at? Nice work ye'd teach the girls, if ye'd your own way. An' it's precious little ye'd do of work if it warn't for me. There now, Tim and Mike, standin' and gossipin' and talkin' there, have you rounded in them cattle for the sale yet? I suppose, when Mr. Looker comes to the auction in the afternoon, ye expect the beasts will trot up to be sold when ye whistle on them—like old Tramp there. An', she added, giving a vigorous push up and down the counter with a big rough duster—'an' it's little good votin' will do ye either, unless they first vote a bit of gumption intil yer heads.'

'All right, Missus Dole, we'll be a-goin' rectly Mr. Brickwood's away,' pleaded Tim.

'An' what have ye along wi' Mr. Brickwood to keep ye hangin' about here, I'd like to know? I s'pose ye're lookin' to him to get ye on under Guv'ment. An' ye may look, I'm thinkin'.'

Frankfort felt that he had little hope of maintaining enlightened views here, against Madam Dole and under all the disadvantages of an unfriendly audience (for even the girls seemed to sympathise with Mrs. Dole), and was not sorry when Quiggle called to him from the other end of the hut: 'Come over and give me a hand here, Mr. Frankfort. I'm nonplussed. I'll be bogged, like Mrs. Dole's dray: I can't manage Ben here—I can't indeed, no way.'

He went over and found the agent engaged in a vigorous but half-laughing dispute with a tall countryman, who was dressed in a substantially-made suit of good clothes, that bore outward testimony to his prosperous condition.

'Ah, bad man—bad man, I'm afraid ; Ben, I'm quite ashamed of you,' Quiggle pursued in his most jocular and winning style ; for he was anxious to conciliate, if possible, Mr. Ben Levey, who was a rather important elector among the farmers on the adjacent plains.

'Why, what's the matter, Quiggle? Nothing wrong with my friend here, I trust? Good day, sir ; hope you're well,' said Frankfort, feeling that now the electioneering was beginning in earnest.

'What's the matter?' asked the agent, still smiling as gaily as possible—'what's the matter? Plenty matter. Why, here's my old friend—my chum, I may call him—Mr. Ben Levey, the big man on the plains—we call him the Pride of the Prairie—if he isn't agoin' to go and vote for Meeks.'

'Ah well, if Mr. Levey, you know,' said Frankfort, speaking in a conciliatory manner, but yet not untruly, 'if he really thinks that Mr. Meeks would be the truer exponent of the principles he holds, why——'

'Ah, that's just it, Ben,' laughed Quiggle ; 'it's not the principles you hold, but the land you hold, that fetches you. Be straight now, Ben : tell the future Member here what your principles are.'

'An' sure it's I that ain't ashamed of them. An' I'll tell Mr. Frankfort here plain enough. Shouldn't we stand by them as stands by us? I'll vote for Meeks 'cause he got me my bit of land there, and I'd like to see the Bank that could lay a finger on it now. Them's my principles and I aren't ashamed of them. Stand by them as stands by you.'

'All right, Ben—all right, Ben ; got you yer land, that's right enough. But how, Ben? straight now—straight, Ben,' urged Quiggle.

'Yes, an' I'm the man to be straight ; I'll not cocker ye up with a lie. He got me the land, though I hadn't resided on it accordin' to the law. That's what I'm beholden to him for.'

'There you are, Ben—there you are ; you didn't comply with the law.'

'An' what would I have wanted with Mr. Meeks if I had

complied with the law? It's the frien' in need that comes in useful.'

'That's all right, Ben, and I admire you for it, Ben. But still now, when you come to pick your public man, you know—to make your laws, ye see—trustee for the public, Mr. Frankfort here calls it—really, Ben, you ought—leading man in the district too—bell wether, lots follow you—really, Ben, now——' Quiggle urged.

'Why, how did Mr. Meeks manage to get the land for you if you had not resided?' interposed our politician, who did not fancy this controversy with Mr. Levey into which he was being drawn.

'Easy enough,' answered Mr. Levey—'easy enough. He goes to Minister and represents the rights of it, at the right time, ye see.' "But, Meeks," says the Minister, "this Mr. Levey has never resided on it to work it according to the Act. It's like making him a present of the land. It's worth £3 or £4 an acre."

"Never mind, Mr. Minister," says Meeks, "the wife's resided there a lot—better half for the whole, ye see." With that he laughs, does Mr. Meeks, and says he, "The Guv'ment want to settle the people on the land, don't they?"

"Well," says the Minister, "the Guv'ment *do* want to settle the right people on the land." So all I know is, that down comes Meeks with Mr. Brickwood's train a few days after, and pops into me hand the Crown grant. An' am I agoin' to turn agin him after that? Not me. Them as sticks by me, I stick by. An' so ye've got the boilin'-down of my votin' for Meeks,—meanin' no offence to the gentleman here as is in training for the Brassville stakes.'

'Right you are, Ben! But vote for us this time, an' we'll get you that lot you want next the swamp, you know; handy for the summer, Ben,' said the agent cheerfully.

But here the conversation was interrupted by a peremptory call from Hiram Brickwood.

'All aboard here, all aboard,—no more time for fooling round there.' This summons had no reference to any particular episode that might be in progress, but was merely Hiram's way and method of exhorting the passengers to prompt attention. It was accompanied by a vigorous and

peremptory flourish round of his arm, as he hurried towards the pine-plank platform at which the train was standing. No offence could be justly taken by any one in particular at this brisk summons, as it and the flourishing arm were directed towards them all generally, just as the efforts of Mike and Tim were shortly afterwards addressed to the whole mob of Mrs. Dole's cattle, when they were rounding them up for Mr. Looker's sale. With hurried adieus to that lady, most respectful too on the part of Quiggle (which she returned with a decisive but not unfriendly nod, arms resolutely fixed on counter as before), he and Frankfort promptly followed Hiram, and soon were safe in their compartment. As they steamed away, Quiggle, when he sat down, having waved farewells to the group of electors at the station, exclaimed gaily, as if partly for Frankfort's information and partly as an instruction to himself—'Chalk her up—chalk her up! H. B., M. D. safe. B. L. doubtful—very.'

'Who—H. B., M. D.?' asked Frankfort, catching imperfectly what he said.

'I'm just a-sayin', Hiram Brickwood and Mother Dole safe. Ben Levey—well, leave her free, leave her free—depends on circumstances. Circumstances mean in this case swamp frontages,' said the agent, with a quiet laugh.

'But how about Madam Dole and the Woman's Rights?' remarked our politician, giving the go-by to this last point of Quiggle's.

'Bless you!' he replied, 'she don't care either way, she don't. It's all one to her. Vote or no vote, she'll rule them about here. Seth Pride and Hannah Gazelle and all their bills can't make her bigger than she is. A vote is only along the footpath—it ain't the whole pike road,' he continued, addressing this last remark rather to himself. Then he remained silent for a while, as if the sentiment which had escaped him involuntarily deserved some thinking over.

'Mr. Levey seems to be for Meeks, right enough,' continued Frankfort.

'Well, though I joked him,' replied the agent, 'really now how can we expect him to go against Meeks?—unless we get him the other lot too. Then,' he mused to himself, 'he can put the two in the scales and weigh them.'

'Ah, I fear I cannot beat Meeks in that line. It seems to me,' said Frankfort, 'that if the man is not entitled to the land, it's like making away with public property to give it to him.'

'Now, my dear sir, that's not quite the way to look at it. You know Dalby—the Honourable Mr. Dalby, Minister of Public Territory—an honest man, you'll admit, quite straight, respectable, all that?'

'Yes, I understand he is all that.'

'Well, it's this way, d'ye see. Policy of country to settle people on the land—poor man especially—somehow or some-way. Ben Levey large family, wife industrious, hard-working miner, pegs out land, can't leave mine, can't work above ground and underground at one and the same time, can he? So law not complied with. Ready to settle now, saved money to work with, wife and six children waiting, smiling homestead, poor man helped, object of law gained, liberal policy—my dear sir, what's the odds?' And Quiggle paused, looking at Frankfort.

'What's the odds—in what?' the latter asked.

'What's the odds, I say, if we *do* add, Meeks, M.H.R., or Frankfort, M.H.R., placated—support liberal Minister—and King's Government carried on—many-sided question—there you are,' and Quiggle stretched out his hands, as if he were holding in them, and presenting bodily to our politician, a clear and fair exposition of the whole situation.

Just then their attention was diverted by the train beginning to slacken speed in the middle of a dense forest. At last it came to a standstill. Many heads promptly appeared at the carriage windows, and the usual demonstrations of curiosity and inquiry as to the cause of the stoppage were made, as Guard Brickwood came along the footboards, unlocked the doors, and briefly announced that, as they had to stay a while, they might get out of the carriages if they liked.

'What's the matter?' asked Frankfort, as Hiram hurried along.

'Stay a moment, my dear sir,' said Quiggle. 'Hiram Brickwood at times is inclined to be a little short, if he's bothered with questions. You can see he's a bit put out.'

‘I only wanted to know what’s wrong, and how long we have to wait.’

‘Just leave it to me,’ pursued the agent. ‘I’ll have it out of him on the quiet.’ And quietly did he follow the ruffled Brickwood, and after an interview, made judiciously short, returned to his companion with a light, relieved countenance.

‘It’s all right—nothing much—one of the engine tubes gone wrong. Hiram’s sent on to the next station to wire to Brassville for a fresh engine.’

‘How long is it likely to be coming?’ asked Frankfort.

‘Not long, he says. He expects one up in a couple of hours,’ replied Quiggle cheerfully.

For the anathemas that one usually hears hurled against the railway company in the old land in case of similar mis-haps there, our politician found substituted here a respectful silence and submissive acquiescence, much the same as that with which we bow before the evils decreed to us by Providence. Somebody was at fault, but that was not a matter to be too narrowly scrutinised. The railways were a monopoly, but a monopoly approved by the people. In Excelsior there was a broad and generous sentiment against any severe exaction of efficiency from your brother man. Live and let live. If the public are inconvenienced at times, that is considered a lesser evil than would be the enforcement of perhaps a stern discipline upon the thousands who serve the public. Indeed, the thing could not be done. Who is to do it?

So the passengers quietly accepted the situation. Quiggle circulated among them the only explanation that the guard would, or perhaps could, give; and, as the afternoon threatened to be showery, they, for the most part, sat in the carriages, whiling away the time as best they could with cards, smoking, and stories. The only malcontent was a commercial traveller from abroad, who was in the compartment next to that in which Frankfort and Quiggle were. He had evidently lost his temper; for he was heard to be distinctly complaining, off and on, during the two hours, something about his business engagements being upset owing to the train not keeping time. At length,

however, the distant rumble of an approaching engine was heard, and Hiram Brickwood came round the carriages demanding tickets and locking the doors again. The temper of the commercial traveller apparently had not improved ; nor, for the matter of that, had Mr. Brickwood's, who, to do him justice, was really annoyed and concerned at the breakdown. So when the guard demanded the traveller's ticket, as well as Frankfort could hear, a sort of altercation sprang up, the traveller maintaining that it was a waste of time, and, in fact, an insult, turning out all the tickets again, when nothing could have got in from the forest, unless a native bear. 'Keeping us over two hours by your bungling, and then delaying over these tickets——' his voice was heard thus, upbraiding even the authorities. Quite alone was he, this grumbler, a sort of railway passenger Thersites. But not more swift was the stick, or sceptre, of the chieftain of old upon the shoulders of that ancient reviler of authority than was the avenging rebuke of Guard Brickwood, straight down upon the malcontent traveller.

'What's the matter with ye? Would ye like to manage them engines yourself? I'd like to see the likes of you at it. It's charging ye for shelter and sittin' accommodation all this time that the Department should be doing.'

And Hiram rather banged the door in his wrath. As he faced, with lowering brow, into the compartment where our travellers were, they at once respectfully presented their tickets, the agent just getting time to exclaim, with an approving look and laugh, before the irate guardian of the train hurried on, 'All right, Hiram, that's you all over—you'll stand no nonsense from either Government or public!'

So they were soon on their way again, and nothing happened for the rest of the journey, except a slight delay at Upper End station, a few miles from Brassville. Frankfort remarked to Quiggle that it rather upset their plans getting in so late in the afternoon.

'The less we say about it the better, Mr. Frankfort,' answered Quiggle. 'Besides, it's just as well being late a bit. Saves too many people coming bothering. There's old Taft, the publican, he'll have been at the station in good

time for his questions about the liquor laws ; but, bless you ! he won't wait : he'll be back long ago to the Blue Grapes.'

'Yes, to be sure, promiscuous questions are bothering, as you say,' replied our politician. 'Often one may want time to explain one's views and put them properly. Any man can ask a question that no one can answer.'

'Just so, my dear sir—as few private expressions of opinions as possible. Leave all to your meeting on Monday. Tell them so—tell them so. Keep her free, sir,' continued the agent, reverting to his old illustration—'keep her free,—easy before the wind, and then you know you can round her up a bit, or slack her off a bit, according to the proper navigation'; and he nodded to his candidate.

By this time they were slowly entering the town of Brassville—Brassville that was big with the political fate of our politician. As they passed along they could see from the train some of the election placards that Quiggle was so proud of, posted through the street that ran parallel to the line.

'Ain't half bad, are they?' he remarked, as he eyed complacently his handiwork. Frankfort looked up and read in big emphatic lines and posters of all sizes and all colours—'Frankfort and Free Water.' 'The Right Man and the Reservoir.' 'The Liberal and the Loan.' 'Meeks and No Money.' 'Ebenezer and Drought.' 'Edward Fairlie and Fountains.'

Frankfort was rather taken aback by all this enthusiastic identification of his name with the Reservoir ; but he had determined to say nothing till he had an opportunity of finally discussing the matter with Mr. Fairlie. He would be quite explicit in his speech at the meeting, at any rate. His attention was called from the perplexing dilemma which was facing him, by Quiggle exclaiming aloud, 'Ah now, that's mean of Seth—real mean now !'

'Why, what's wrong?' he asked.

'What's wrong? Look there ! Seth Pride has gone and cribbed from your placard,' said Quiggle, pointing to a flaming poster, with an emphatic blue ribbon border, that proclaimed 'Prohibition and Public Fountains.'

'Seth now,' the agent continued, 'should have left the fountains to us. I was out first. "Edward Fairlie and Fountains" go very nicely.'

As they stepped out upon the platform, they found that several who had been there at the hour of arrival fixed by the time-table had left; but still there remained a group of the citizens of Brassville, most of whom were supporters of Frankfort; and prominent among them was Mr. Seth Pride himself. Him the jealous Quiggle would have assailed about the borrowed placard, were it not that he was prudently desirous of getting the candidate to the Lake Reservoir Hotel as soon as possible, so as to obviate that random questioning which, as we have seen, he considered to be both unprofitable and dangerous in electioneering.

Seth Pride was thus left free to welcome our politician, which he did in formal phrase, assuring him that, much as he and his friends valued the Reservoir for the sake of the town and district, they specially prized it for the moral effect that the grand supply of fresh pure water would have in promoting their cause and temperance generally.

'We truly say, sir, in our Blue Ribbon placard "Prohibition and Public Fountains." You can have Prohibition, if you first have public fountains.'

'I am all for temperance,' remarked Frankfort, 'but as to Prohibition——'

'You'll be at our meeting on Monday night, Seth,' interposed Quiggle, 'and our new Member will deal with the whole question. You'll be happy, I can tell you, when you hear him.'

'I trust so,' said Mr. Pride. 'And let me convey to you, sir, the special compliments of Miss Gazelle. She trusts to make your acquaintance later on. She knows of your noble principles on the emancipation of woman.'

There could be no doubt that both Seth Pride and Miss Gazelle had sincerely in view a great moral purpose, namely, to make men sober and generally improve social life. There may have been in their mixed championship some personal ambition; and their cause so absorbed them that they could think of nothing else, nor could they make any allowance for other people thinking of anything else

either ; still, it had the great merit of being, amid all the din and hollowness of political cries, a cause guided by a high moral purpose.

At the mention of woman by Mr. Pride, Bill Nash, the cobbler, came edging up closer to our politician. He had once been stigmatised by Miss Gazelle as the impenitent cobbler, when he was persisting in disturbing one of her meetings, and the epithet had stuck to him.

'What's that Seth Pride's a-saying about wimmin?' he asked, as he pushed in towards Frankfort in a shuffling manner.

'Shake hands—keep him right,' whispered Quiggle, as the candidate and Bill Nash clasped hands.

'He says, Bill, that all the ladies are to be enfranchised—made free to vote like, you know,' the agent explained.

'Ah well, just as Mr. Pride wants about the wimmin—he can do as 'e likes wi' 'em, so long as you get us the water, Mr. Franker. Give me the water without the wimmin, before the wimmin without the water'; and Mr. Nash gave an awkward look round for moral support to his sentiment.

'All right, Bill!' exclaimed Quiggle; 'come to our meeting on Monday, and you'll hear all about it. We want you and all the leading men to roll up.'

Soon pushing through the little crowd, they reached their vehicle, which was placarded on both sides 'Frankfort and Free Water,' and drove to the Lake Reservoir Hotel. The driver pointed out, on the way, where the main pipes were to enter the town direct from the filtering basin, which was to be about a mile up in the rising ground. Mr. Tom Hilton, the landlord of the Lake Reservoir, welcomed them in a free-and-easy manner to the house, and handed Frankfort a letter from his uncle, Mr. Fairlie. He opened the letter with some eagerness, as he was anxious to have his contemplated meeting with Mr. Fairlie as soon as possible, so that he might clearly ascertain and finally settle his position with regard to this disquieting problem that was now daily and hourly coming nearer to him. He was disappointed to find that his uncle had to leave town for a couple of days to go to the Silveracre side, in order

to look into the accounts of one of the Bank's branches; but Mr. Fairlie expected to return on the Monday afternoon, and he expressed the hope that Frankfort would come and see him then, so that they could talk over the prospects of the election. He added that his aunt would have insisted upon his staying with them, as he did on his previous visit, only that she knew it was better for him at election times to be at the hotel. The kind lady herself indeed added a few womanly strokes in a P.S., concluding with 'Success to you and the Reservoir.—H. F.'

As our politician was being shown upstairs, he noticed off the landing what appeared to be a rather spacious bathroom, and with the instinctive longing of one who had just come from a railway journey, he bethought himself of getting a bath, before taking a short walk with Quiggle down the town. Upon inquiry, however, he ascertained that the spacious baths had been constructed somewhat prematurely in the, as it proved, too confident expectation that the Brassville Reservoir would have been in the last Loan. Now, however, though everything was completed internally, they were at a standstill in the matter of baths till they could connect with the reticulation of the new works. So he had to content himself with a wash in the basin, and soon was ready to begin the work of canvassing, placing himself upon view, as it were, of the electors. He found the placards up everywhere announcing his meeting for the following Monday. The list of the independent electors whom he met and talked with would be long to tell. He got somewhat confused with the number of new faces, and once was upon the point, till Quiggle stopped him, of greeting anew a citizen whom he had a little before shaken hands with in another street. But two things, and two only, appeared to him to stand out clearly from all the hubbub—one, the general condemnation of Meeks, who had been for some days in the town engaged in an uphill canvass; the other, that the Reservoir was quietly taken as an accepted fact. Both topics were taken for granted, and so he was saved trouble in regard to them. This was quite agreeable to him; for, as to the Reservoir, he was at present holding his peace;

and as for Meeks, he felt it would be unworthy of him to join in any vulgar outcry against his antagonist.

After they had seen a number of electors, Quiggle left our politician with Woodall, the bookseller, while he went down to the offices of the *Trumpeter* and the *Scorcher*, to see to the advertisements for Monday's meeting; and also, while settling accounts at each office up to date, to arrange for suitable notices of the arrival of his candidate. Our politician enjoyed the conversation with the bookseller. Woodall belonged to that not inconsiderable class of electors who, if they do not talk as much as others, think more independently. These men often have not the weight in the political battle that their numbers entitle them to, for they are not disciplined to act together; and in that battle, as in all other battles, the compact, well-drilled, and cleverly-led battalions carry the day sometimes against a scattered and inert majority. Our politician had no wish to make the conversation degenerate into a mere canvass upon his part; but Woodall volunteered his views upon some matters connected with the election. Meeks was a poor creature, no doubt, but not so bad as some of them made out. 'And, after all,' he added, 'what better can you expect from our system?'

This was not very reassuring to our politician, who stood at the threshold, soon, as he hoped, to enter as one of the workers under this system himself. Woodall, who had been only thinking of his subject, noticed the flit of disappointment that passed over Frankfort's face, and continued:

'To be sure, some men may be strong enough to be stronger than the system. But I speak of the rank and file.'

'Well, Mr. Woodall, I cannot say whether I belong to the rank and file or not; but I hope to be returned for Brassville, and yet to do nothing that I need be ashamed of.'

'Just so, Mr. Frankfort; so I hope and believe too. You are not fixing that parcel right, my boy: the books should be packed edges in.'

This last remark was addressed to a flaxen-haired, refined-looking boy, who was fumbling over a set of books

that he was trying to encase in several large wrappers of brown paper, after the manner of booksellers.

‘Give it to me, Harry, I will finish it. You can go up the shop. It is queer,’ he continued, addressing Frankfort, ‘how stupid intellectually quick boys sometimes are in the simplest practical things. That boy is a capital scholar for his age; yet he cannot see, though he has often been shown, that if you don’t put the edges inside they are apt to get rubbed.

‘Yes,’ he went on, ‘as I was saying just now, I hope and believe that you will be returned, Mr. Frankfort. But why? Why, to be plain with you—as a gentleman you understand plain, truthful speech—because Meeks did not get us the Reservoir, and we think you will. If we believed that Meeks would get it and that you would not, whom do you think we’d have? Whom would you expect us to have yourself?’

Frankfort rather quailed under this decisive way of putting the case. Yet the bookseller appeared to be an intelligent man, of broad views. So he resolved to sound his ideas upon the Reservoir question a little further.

‘You are all for the Reservoir, I suppose?’

‘Well, of course I am for it,’ he said with a quiet laugh. ‘I’m in no public position. I have no special duty to look after the State’s interests. So I am all for it.’

‘Yet you support it, I presume, on public grounds?’

‘I support it as a citizen of Brassville. If we can get a quarter of a million spent here, we will all be the richer for it—Henry Woodall, bookseller, included. You cannot expect me to object to that, if the generous State gives it to me.’

‘But then,’ said Frankfort, feeling that the bookseller was not speaking his whole mind upon the matter, ‘you know that you’ll have to pay six or seven per cent interest upon it afterwards.’

‘As to that,’ replied Woodall, finishing up and tying round his parcel, and looking down to see if the folds were straight underneath—‘as to that, Mr. Frankfort, you understand that, though I don’t refuse the Loan, personally I did not propose it. I have nothing to do with arranging the

terms, whether of repayment or otherwise. As to the interest,' he continued quietly, as he looked up from the parcel at our politician, and speaking very slowly, 'even unpractical Harry there could see that this small district is as likely to pay it as it is to pay the Army Pensions List of the United States.'

Here the conversation was interrupted by Quiggle, who, having arranged with the *Trumpeter* and the *Scorcher*, had come back for his principal. For he held it his duty, as the agent managing this election, not to leave him for the evening till he had seen him safe back at the Lake Reservoir Hotel; which done, and having congratulated him on the excellent progress they were making, he hastened to his home, which was a couple of miles out of the town, where Mrs. Quiggle and the children were eagerly expecting him. For he was an affectionate little man, and he had not seen wife and family since he left them early in the week, on going to the capital to transact his business and to accompany the candidate back to Brassville.

Frankfort was not sorry to be left alone. Electioneering is hard work. The iteration of the same subjects, fresh to each new inquirer, but only too familiar to you, tells like the continuous dropping of the water on the stone. Holding noisy meetings is a relief to it. He needed rest. But there was another reason why he was glad to be left alone. He wanted to think over the position that was facing him. It was narrowing down now to a decisive issue. This was Friday evening, and on Monday afternoon he was to meet his uncle and come to a final understanding as to what the constituency would demand. The public declaration of his principles was to be made a few hours later on the Monday evening. From his careful observation of the country around Brassville made on his journey down, and now of the wants and resources of the place itself, he could see clearly that Mr. Dorland was not far wrong when he described the whole project emphatically as a job. No more was Blanksby wrong in his estimate of it. Even Woodall, while admitting that he wanted it, did not pretend that it was anything else than a job. The bookseller excused himself by saying that he had no public position or

duty to the State to discharge. But could he, Frankfort, say the same if he should be elected? If, as was plain enough, the district was merely seeking to grasp a largess out of the Treasury, what would be his real purpose in assisting them? Would it not be simply to secure a seat in Parliament for himself and further his own prospects? Yet how unanimous and how resolute were they all for it. Matter here sufficient for one evening's cogitation!

After breakfast the next day, Saturday, Quiggle arrived early to take his candidate upon further rounds among the electors. He told him that a number of societies and representative bodies were desirous of having interviews with him, but that Louis Quiggle knew better than to allow them to come till after the meeting on Monday. 'Keep her free—keep her free, easy going, moderate sail, till after the meeting,' he remarked. The Town Council, it seemed, wanted to discuss with him the basis of rating for paying the interest on the quarter of a million. The Labour Union was determined to have the work done by day labour under Government control, instead of having it let out to contractors. The importers of pipes and of the necessary machinery for the engine-houses desired to have the customs duty on their wares remitted, so as to cheapen the work; while, on the other hand, the makers of those lines of manufactures maintained that the use of all imported stuff should be prohibited, so as to encourage native industry. The Plumbers' Union wished a few alterations to be made in the Plumbers Act, in view of the extensive work that would fall to their lot, and that the minimum wage to be fixed by the Government for the employees should be a reasonably liberal one.

'All right, Quiggle, I'll see the lot of them on Tuesday,' said Frankfort, as they walked together down the street.

'Why, here's Hedger coming along—perhaps the lawyers want a deputation too,' remarked the agent, laughing.

'Well met, sir; I welcome you to Brassville,' said Hedger. 'When I saw you at Lamborn's I thought some way you'd come to belong to us in time. You're one of the family, ye see. We all like Fairlie—useful man in the Bank parlour at a pinch. I hope you'll prove equally useful to us, Mr. Frankfort, at this pinch.'

'You're very kind, Mr. Hedger, and I hope that the election day will show that I do belong to you. Here is Quiggle who says that you gentlemen of the law want me to meet a deputation from the lawyers about the Reservoir.'

'From us? Oh no—we want no deputations.'

'Well, to be sure, I suppose not. Your profession has not much interest in it, has it?'

'My word though, haven't we? The conveyancing alone of the land to be taken up means thousands to us—not to talk of arbitrations and litigation. Yes, yes, where there's money spending, there's work brewing,' responded the candid Hedger. 'Besides,' he added, turning confidentially to the candidate, 'the landowners are our best clients, and some of them will gain £2 or £3 an acre for parts of their land by it. I should say that it would add some £20,000 to the value of Lamborn's property.'

Our politician and the agent then passed on to pay an official visit to His Worship the Mayor. This was expected of all candidates, and the Mayor preserved the dignity of his office by giving an impartial welcome to all comers, as Mayor; but in his individual capacity as Simon Trigge, Esquire, he reserved the right of supporting 'the candidate of his free choice as a plain man.' While they were walking up the street Quiggle informed Frankfort that as a fact His Worship was going straight for him, right before the wind; and that he, Quiggle, had already chalked him up; though he was compelled to mark the Town Clerk as doubtful, owing to his being indebted to Meeks, many years ago, for getting him registered (irregularly) as a Government Surveyor. Of course, however, he would not expect any intimation of His Worship's private opinion at the official interview, the more especially as the representative of the *Scorcher* was likely to be present. As a fact, it turned out as the agent had said. His Worship received them with dignity, the Town Clerk standing a little behind him on one side. But the Mayor gave no vent to his opinions upon the subject that every one was thinking of, beyond the indefinite statement that 'Mr. Frankfort might rely upon it that the Mayor and Corporation of Brassville would ever prove true to the man of the people's choice.'

The civic interview, therefore, was short, and Quiggle hurried away his candidate to meet the other public bodies and representative men, of whom there were a good many, for Brassville was full of political life. Our politician was struck by the intelligent bearing of the people he met; there was nothing to be seen among them of the ignorance or passion that marked the crowd of old. Yet they did not concern themselves with high matters. They did not appear to be troubled about great questions of National policy. They were active for their own local wants, and as Government undertook to supply these, dealing with the Government for them engaged much energy that under a different system would be expended upon general politics.

They got back from their second street canvass about mid-day, and Quiggle gave our politician the grateful information that he could have the rest of the day to himself, as under the Public Recreation Act (which a special bye-law passed under the auspices of Mayor Trigge had made applicable to Brassville) no business could be transacted or work done in the town on Saturday afternoon. They did their late shopping on the Friday. The people therefore were scattered about in quest of change or amusement. Quiggle felt that it was only reasonable that he should rest from his work as well as the others, and enjoy a quiet afternoon and a Sunday's repose with Mrs. Quiggle and the children, before he entered upon the raging battle of the coming week. Mrs. Quiggle, indeed, had given him positive orders, when he was leaving in the morning, to come home in time to give the baby—only two months old—its usual airing in the perambulator, which it had got very irregularly during his absence on his late visit to the city. But he advised Frankfort to attend the lecture announced for that evening at the hall of the Young Men's Association of Brassville. Frankfort knew the hall, and had met the President, Mr. Job Runter, who was to take the chair, when he was in the town before. 'And,' continued Quiggle, 'Job knows of your coming—I told him; he'll take you in tow as soon as you put your head inside the door.' The agent then departed till the Monday, having first picked out of a bundle of papers and cuttings a neatly-

printed leaflet which contained the announcement of the lecture.

From this it appeared that Mr. Edmund Bainbridge, a native of the town, who had just returned from a business trip to India, was to discourse upon the wonders of that land. Our politician felt disinclined to go, as he knew that Myles Dillon was to arrive that evening from Miranda, to be ready for the operation at the Hospital on the Sunday morning, and he certainly would have preferred to spend a few hours with him. But he had been always accustomed to put business before pleasure, so after he had told Mr. Hilton, the landlord of the Lake Reservoir Hotel, to be on the lookout for Dillon, he walked down to the lecture hall.

He found it filled with what might be described as the middle class of Brassville—moral, intelligent, homely people, the very backbone, you would say, of a nation. The president at once recognised Frankfort, and did ‘take him in tow’ as Quiggle had expected, and towed him straight up to the platform. He would have preferred a quiet seat among the crowd; but he felt that a man, by seeking to become a public man, at once made himself public property, and people naturally like to have a good look at their favourites. Even the chips that Mr. Gladstone chopped out of the trees at Hawarden were regarded with admiration across the Atlantic. When all were seated the President introduced the lecturer in those highly favourable terms which men use in describing one another upon such occasions. He concluded by saying that the information that Mr. Bainbridge would give them on the irrigation system of India would be of supreme moment to Brassville at the present time. It certainly seemed that the lecturer had bestowed much thought and observation on that subject, as his address mainly consisted of a minute description of the Saderwarry Reservoir and a comprehensive account of the points of resemblance in the natural features of the country about Saderwarry and Brassville, respectively. He pointedly turned towards our politician at the most pregnant passages of his discourse, and each time all eyes were turned upon the coming Member, just as if he were supposed to have the Reservoir somewhere about him. Loud applause

greeted each reference to the coming boon, with an occasional exclamation of assent from the body of the hall such as one hears at fervid religious meetings. When Bainbridge was getting near the end of his address, the president leaned over to Frankfort and asked him if he would like to move a vote of thanks to the lecturer. The secretary generally did it, but if Frankfort asked him he would no doubt give way. 'It would bring you forward a bit, you know, and you could bring down the house about the Reservoir.' As the reader understands, this was just what our politician wanted to avoid; so he protested that he would on no account interfere with the prescriptive rights and duties of the secretary; and he was not sorry when the meeting broke up and he found himself hurrying away down the street among the crowd, who were expressing marked sentiments of approval that appeared to be impartially divided between Bainbridge and the Reservoir.

When he got back to the hotel he found Dillon quietly enjoying his evening pipe.

'All hail, my political friend, lesser than old Meeks and greater—not yet M.P., but safe to be hereafter! They tell me that you're getting on famously—you and the Reservoir are both safe. They'll get you, and you'll get the Lake.'

Frankfort did not care to disclose, even to Dillon, the perplexity that beset him until he had seen Mr. Fairlie and heard his last word upon the difficulty. He knew that Dillon had not considered the subject, and thought it very likely, therefore, that if he asked him his opinion, the reply would probably be to promise anything they wanted, so long as they promised to elect him, with possibly the additional advice not to be drowned like a rat in a tank anyway, or something equally absurd. So he preferred for the present to keep his own counsel. He only replied, 'Yes, I am doing well. But of course I cannot say till they hear my principles at my meeting on Monday.'

'Your principles?'

'Yes, I say my principles—my political principles, upon which I am asking them to return me to Parliament.'

'That's all right, Edward,' remarked Dillon. 'I only

spoke because since I've been here I've only heard of the one principle—though that is rather a big one, to be sure—the Reservoir.'

This remark rather staggered our politician, for, now that it was put to him, he recalled the fact that, so far, in his canvass the only reference to public questions had been that made by Mr. Seth Pride regarding Prohibition and Woman's Emancipation. In truth, from all that he had seen or heard, it was plain enough that, given the Reservoir, he could hold any opinions he liked; but without it, no opinions would avail him. He only replied:

'So far, we have been dealing with local matters; on Monday I open out.'

'An' I wish you all luck, Edward Fairlie. So long as you and the independent ones hit it off, that's all that's wanted. Please yourselves; you'll never find any one else better worth pleasing. If I were standing now, I'd promise them two Reservoirs—one at each end of the town, and pipes reticulating to the front door and the back door of every citizen.'

'What's the use of talking nonsense, Myles?'

'Well, I'm only saying, from all that I've heard, that's what would fetch them. The landlord kept haranguing me about it when I was getting a bit to eat. The man who drove me up from the station asked me if I was one of the survey party for the site. I gave him a bit of a short answer; he only heard a word or so in the rumbling along of the trap, and he turns to me quite cheerfully, "Yes, that's it, Guv'nor; the Dam is the big thing—but if they'll do it by day labour and get rid of them contractors, it'll come cheap enough." Why, the housemaid here told me that I'd have to wait for the Reservoir before I could get washed.'

'Oh, but you know, Myles, you must have cries of all sorts about at an election. And constituencies will naturally want to look after themselves.'

'Yes, and want you to look after them too.'

'By the way, do you remember, Myles, your advice on the subject during our discussion about politics on our last walk in Scotland?'

'Why, what was that?'

‘That what was wanted of a politician now was, not to die for his country, but to live for his constituency!’

‘Well, and that is my advice still. If I were now going into Parliament I would live for my constituency—that is, next after myself—and then the general country can come in for its turn.’

Frankfort felt too uneasy about the subject to enjoy his friend’s outspoken cynicism, so he turned the conversation to the case of the bugler boy whom Myles Dillon was to operate on next morning. The young surgeon was interested about this case, and anxious about it. He looked forward to it with some apprehension as to the results. It was *his* Reservoir. He had to be up early the next day, the Sunday, in order to be in good time at the Hospital for the operation; so the rights of constituencies and the duties of representatives were not further discussed between the friends.

As for our politician, he looked forward to a day of real rest on the morrow, free from questions, interviews, visits, meetings, parleys, conferences, and Reservoirs. He intended going to Mr. Keech’s church, partly to see the people, but also because he found in the religious service of the first day of the week a relief from the work and cares of the other six. On the Sunday morning, then, he strolled down to Saint Chad’s, longing to enjoy one function, at least, which would be restful and free from political perplexities. Mr. Keech was reputed to be an eloquent preacher; and then he always had a liking for the fine old Church of England service, though it was not that which he had been accustomed to attend. So he felt that he was doing the right thing for a quiet off-day, and disregarded Quiggle’s advice that it would be better to go to the Salvation Army gathering at the Temperance Hall. He was only just in time; but the verger knew him, and gave him a good seat, one or two rows behind quite a large and well-furnished front pew that reminded him of the lord’s or squire’s pew in the country churches of the old land.

The service was just about to begin, when there was a slight stir in the congregation, and the Honourable Mrs. Lamborn swept by into that front pew, followed by Miss

Lamborn. The Honourable Mr. Lamborn himself rarely attended church service ; but he had a great faith in the vicarious devotions of his wife and daughter ; and Mrs. Lamborn considered it distinctly proper to go, for the sake of example. Frankfort was no judge of dress, but he was struck by the massiveness and richness of the dark velvet of her gown. There could be no doubt of its weight and dignity, though, to be sure, it seemed to be a little heavy for such a bright and rather warm day. On the other hand, Miss Lamborn wore a dress of some white material, with blue-coloured edging, that appeared to be simplicity itself, yet which struck him as being certainly very effective, though he had not sufficient knowledge upon the subject to be able to say to what the effect was owing. It might be due to the skill of the maker, or, for the matter of that, to the graceful proportions of the wearer. Mrs. Lamborn had mentioned incidentally in conversation at The Blocks that she got most of her dresses from Europe direct. However, he had no wish to waste his attention upon these matters ; still, as he was only a couple of pews behind, he could not help noticing that the plainer and less gorgeous figure of the two was undeniably the more graceful and striking. But he soon withdrew his observation from these vanities, and attended to the service, only glancing round now and then to observe what the aristocracy of Brassville were like ; for Mr. Keech's church was the church of the better-off. He noticed that the difference was chiefly in the dress. The type of people was much the same in the street as in the mansion.

When Mr. Keech came to the Creed, and was giving the leading words to the choir, Frankfort, taking the opportunity to look round at the congregation, found that his attention was caught again by the striking fit of the white frock. It seemed so absurd for him to be looking at it, for as a dress Mrs. Lamborn's was the more imposing one. Still, it did catch his eye, and there was something, he thought, peculiarly graceful in the bend of its folds when Eilly Lamborn gave a gentle curtsy at the appropriate time in the saying of the Creed.

He was amused with himself, and at the same time

annoyed at his wasting his attention upon this girl's frock and curtesy; so much so that he felt rather relieved when Mr. Keech, the prayers being over, walked into the pulpit to deliver the discourse of the day. This was always looked forward to with interest, for the minister's ability as a preacher was well known. Frankfort settled him down for a quiet half-hour. The text was that noble verse from the Psalms:

'Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.'

The preacher began: 'My Christian Brethren, you are all anxious now about the Reservoir—you are eager for the pools of waters, the flowing channels, the falling rain to fill the pools or reservoirs—but let me lead you——'

Our candidate looked up at the pulpit with a dazed feeling. A fearful dread came over him lest the preacher might make a direct reference to him about this Reservoir; or some one even stand up, then and there, and ask him a question regarding it. It certainly seemed to him that several people looked in the direction of his pew. What if he were asked to say a few words about it at the close of the service? Appalling thought! A little time served to dissipate his fears. Mr. Keech went on to deal with the religious aspects of his text, and he was well worth listening to. In fact, he had begun by alluding to the Reservoir not in the interests of water, but in the interests of religion; because he knew all men to be so deeply concerned in it, that he thought it a good topic by which to attract them to the deeper meanings of the verse. And he kept their attention sustained throughout, by a number of ingenious parallels which he drew between the works of the proposed Reservoir and the operation of sacred influences upon the human heart.

After the service Frankfort helped Mrs. and Miss Lamborn into their pony phaeton, which Miss Lamborn drove; and Mrs. Lamborn courteously asked him to come and have a quiet Sunday afternoon with them at The Blocks. Mr. Lamborn was away up country at the shearing. 'And to be out of all this noisy work and fuss about these

election goings-on, you know—for Parliament, you know,' she added.

He was a little doubtful about going. To be sure, the Reservoir could give him no trouble among these ladies, yet he felt rather tired, and he looked it.

'Tired?' continued Mrs. Lamborn. 'No, really, are you?—this talking all over the place about things. Well, come to us and you can be quiet. We won't speak to you, truly; Eilly here mustn't open her mouth. Dear Mr. Keech himself is coming—nothing more exciting than tea and sacred music.'

'Yes, do come; both Mrs. Bussell and Miss Corney will be there, and they are so good in sacred music.'

Miss Lamborn spoke quite frankly. Her mother wished him to come, why should not she?

He could do no other than accept a call so kindly given, and a very pleasant afternoon he enjoyed. He liked sacred songs; and then Miss Lamborn's frank and natural conversation was so pleasant, as indeed almost any non-political conversation would be to him after the week's work. Several members of Brassville society were at the reception. The hostess was most kind, greeting him as, in fact, their Member already, and a brother legislator with Mr. Lamborn.

'He will so like, you know,' she said, 'to have a gentleman to act with. Not but that he'll help to get some place or something for that poor—what do you call him?—or some way for him to live. He's been here so long, and always attentive like, you know, to Mr. Lamborn, and to things for the place, you see.'

'But, Mrs. Lamborn,' answered Frankfort, 'we must not make too sure. My opponent Mr. Meeks has many friends.'

'No, really? I thought it was all arranged already,' said Mrs. Lamborn.

'Oh, certainly not. You can never tell what may happen till the election day,' he remarked, feeling that there was a deeper meaning in what he said than Mrs. Lamborn had any idea of.

'You don't say so? Why, Mr. Lamborn told me that you and the Reservoir would be fixed up together. He speaks

in that sort of way at times, you know. He gets it electioneering, I suppose. I don't understand these things ; but how can they want that poor—what's-his-name?—again——'

'Mother, Mrs. Bussell is going to sing the "Dies Irae,"' said Miss Lamborn, raising her hand in a deprecating way, and meaning her warning for Frankfort as well. She objected to the custom of keeping on the flow of gentle chatter up to the last moment—in fact, till the singer actually begins, and perhaps has then to drown the talk in the notes of the song. If people took the trouble to sing, it seemed to her to be only fair that others should take the trouble to listen, and to appear ready for the song, not as if their conversation was interrupted by it. Mrs. Bussell sang the grand old hymn with some power, Mr. Keech turning over the music himself, and following her to the sofa, when she left the piano, still pronouncing encomiums on the performance. A slight difficulty in the afternoon's programme here arose by young Hilljohn—nephew of Mr. Hilljohn of the Charlotte Mount estate, one of the finest in the district—wanting to give some of his favourite Christy Minstrel songs, not of the merely jocular, but of the more homely, sentimental kind. Mr. Keech, however, when appealed to by Mrs. Lamborn, objected, unless the song was of the distinctly religious type, and, as that lady fully supported her pastor, the young man was compelled, after some futile displays of argument upon his part, to content himself with giving 'Dar's a light on de opposite shore,' which did not suit his voice at all as well as the one which he had intended to sing.

'You like sacred music, Miss Lamborn?' said Frankfort, as the last of Hilljohn's notes died away.

'Yes, I do, but really it seems to me that there is something sacred in all true music. I feel it in that way, at least, when one sings a fine song, that comes home to one,' she answered.

'Most true, Miss Lamborn ; but I see it is only sacred songs to-day—no Scotch songs at all? Though, in fact, some of Burns's are quite religious, are they not?'

He thought he would at least try his chance of again hearing Miss Lamborn render Burns.

'Well, mother would not like it, really on account of Mr. Keech. And it would not be nice if it put him out, would it? He is so good-natured himself. And then we can sing them all the rest of the week, can't we?'

'Certainly. We'll say nothing more about Scotch songs to-day,' replied Frankfort promptly, feeling consoled for the loss of his song by sympathy with the good taste of Miss Lamborn's answer.

'Though to be sure, now that I think of it,' she continued, turning quickly to him, as if she had forgotten something, which in fact she had—'now that I think of it, Miss Maillard has prevailed on mother to let her sing her song—just at the end, you know.'

'Her song? Miss Maillard's song? Something new, I suppose?' said Frankfort.

'Not heard of it? Why you must be really quite out of society. It's the song of the season here. There, she's going to sing now. Listen.'

And Miss Maillard began to sing with her fine soprano voice that striking song, 'Where the Sparkling Fountains flow.' The Rev. Mr. Keech did not turn over the music. Still, he expressed no outward disapproval; and indeed how could he? Had he not alluded to the Reservoir himself in his sermon. Hilljohn, when Miss Maillard left the piano, with that self-opinionativeness for which some young people are so remarkable, vainly endeavoured to reopen the question of his songs, in relation to the permission accorded to Miss Maillard. But the whole moral sense of the little public in Mrs. Lamborn's drawing-room was dead against him, on the ground that the subject illustrated by Miss Maillard's song made it an exception to the general rule.

'That's pretty, is it not?' said Miss Lamborn to Frankfort, as the company rose up generally to congratulate Miss Maillard, and to prepare to depart. Mr. Keech had to get back to Brassville in good time for the evening service. 'That's pretty, is it not?—the "flow, flow, flow" comes in so prettily.'

'*Very*,' replied Frankfort.

He was to drive back with Mr. Keech, and Mrs. Lamborn and Eilly walked out to the verandah to see them start.

'Now that you are one of us, you must often come to see us, Mr. Frankfort,' observed Mrs. Lamborn.

'Most kind of you, Mrs. Lamborn; though you know, as I said a while ago—wait for Friday week.'

'Oh, that'll be all right. Tom knows about these sort of things. He told me, as I told you, you know—you are ours.' She added, with a rather languid smile, 'That is, until we get tired of you.'

'Yes, mother,' interposed Miss Lamborn, 'or until he gets tired of us.'

'Now that's so like you, Eilly; you're always saying something out of the way and odd-like, going differently from other people.'

'I only say, mother, that Mr. Frankfort might get tired of us; or we might get tired of one another.'

'Well, and what's the use of saying that and things like that? How can Mr. Professor Frankfort here get tired of a place in Parliament and politics, and all that? And as for our getting tired, of course I was only joking. Are we likely, I'd like to know, to have that Mr. Meeks, or whatever he's called, again?'

'Yes, now really, Miss Lamborn, how can you say that I, at least, would get tired of you?' Frankfort gallantly interposed.

'I only mean,' said Miss Lamborn, with her cheerful laugh, as her mother turned to say something to Mr. Keech about his projected flower mission—'I only mean that, much as you like us now, you might in time prefer the University to talking for us and our Reservoir.'

'Ah no, Miss Lamborn,' answered Frankfort, laughing too, 'if my friend Mr. Dillon were here now, he would remind you of his poet Moore's sentiment—the heart that has truly loved never forgets.'

'What's that you people are saying about hearts?' interposed Mrs. Lamborn, looking round.

'Mr. Frankfort here says,' answered Eilly, 'that politicians' hearts are always true—never forget their first love. I am only going to say that I did not know it before.'

'That's right, Mr. Frankfort,' exclaimed Mr. Keech,

anxious to make a remark at once secular and popular — ‘that’s right! Always be true to the Reservoir.’

‘You see, my dear sir,’ he continued, as they drove back to town together, ‘the Reservoir is the subject that occupies men’s minds now, and we must introduce religion as best we may by this door, by that, by land, by water, *per fas, per nefas*. Certainly,’ he added, ‘I want the Reservoir too; but all the while I take the topic so as to lead to higher things than even the Reservoir. Yes, my dear sir, we work *per fas et per nefas*.’

‘What, *per nefas* too!’ exclaimed Frankfort.

The conversation then turned upon what was *nefas* in public affairs, and this question had not been settled when they shook hands at parting at the Lake Reservoir Hotel.

And so Monday morning dawned. Our politician felt rather fidgety going on his rounds with Quiggle, as he could not but realise how uncertain his whole position was, until he had his contemplated discussion with his kind friend and uncle, and had settled with one who so thoroughly understood both the constituency and the Reservoir question what sort of compromise would be likely to be possible, if any, upon the perplexing and, as it seemed to him, ever-growing difficulty of the Reservoir. After lunch, he told Quiggle that he might leave him till the evening, as he had an appointment with Mr. Fairlie, and he then wished a short time to himself to prepare for the meeting.

He was certainly depressed, and not without some feeling of agitation. Many a man may be firm and steady enough in the actual battle, and yet his pulse may beat quickly just as he is going into it. And it was the crisis of the whole matter that now approached. From all he saw, heard, or knew, he felt certain that unless, after his discussion with Mr. Fairlie, he could see some hope of the Brassville people agreeing to have the Reservoir over the Divide, and getting water by the tunnel that Blanksby spoke of, it would be impossible for him to go on with any prospect of success. Yet it was desperately awkward breaking down in this way. He knew that his uncle was anxious for him to enter public life. It would, Mr. Fairlie thought, increase his

influence, as it certainly would his income ; and though the Banker had never hinted at it, Frankfort could not but remember that the greater part of that early debt was still owing. As he walked hurriedly, he was soon at the Bank, and the maid showed him straight into the Bank parlour. She said that Mrs. Fairlie and Master Teddy and Miss Minnie had gone to spend the afternoon at The Blocks ; but that Mr. Fairlie had come back from the country and would see him directly. The house was very still ; everything was quiet—wife and children away. The most solemn room in the building was, of course, the Bank parlour, and it seemed now to be more solemn than ever, with its massive mahogany furniture, large slowly-ticking clock, heavy oil portrait of the Chairman of the Board, chilly atmosphere, and dim light. For the room was shady, not to say dark, in the afternoons, when the sun was on the other side of the house.

In a few moments Mr. Fairlie came in.

‘Glad to see you, Edward ! The aunt and the youngsters are away at The Blocks ; but you can tell me all, and I can tell her. She asked how you were getting on when I got home to-day, and I said, “He’s carrying all before him. See the Conquering Hero——” After just greeting his nephew, he had glanced down at the small pile of letters that had accumulated in his absence, while he talked on. As he looked up at Frankfort direct, he could not but be struck by the solemn gravity of his countenance.

‘Why, what !’ he exclaimed, ‘you’re not knocked up with electioneering already ? Tired a bit ? Let us sit down.’

‘Fact is, uncle,’ slowly responded the other, ‘I am stuck up—blocked—don’t see how I can go on, unless——’

‘Oh well, Edward, don’t mind that. Elections are expensive—the early ones especially before a man gets a hold. Don’t go too deep, but you can always get a lift from the Bank—matter of business. Why, I settle these things by the dozen here of a day in this very room—personal character a great point—in fact, that’s what this parlour is for’ ; and the Banker gave a cheerful laugh.

‘Not that—not that, uncle. I arranged for that when I determined to stand—it’s not that. It’s this confounded Reservoir !’

'The Reservoir? Why, that's what will bring you in. Meeks failed with it; you succeed.'

'I can't go for it. It's a big job!' said Frankfort, thinking it better to come to the point at once.

'A job? How do you know that? We ask what we want. The Government give what they can. Besides, who says it's a job?'

'For one, the President of the University, Mr. Dorland, called it a confounded job of the politicians.'

'Now really, Frankfort, for you to be taken in like that, and you're going on for thirty, aren't you? Of course Mr. Dorland calls it a job, because he wants the Reservoir over the Divide. He wants it for his mines. I don't blame him. I know him well—naturally he looks after his own interests. So do we after ours.'

'But I didn't rely upon his word. I went into the whole thing with Lavender and Blanksby. I can see the country around me. How could it ever pay a quarter per cent on the money? The thing speaks for itself.' Frankfort spoke plainly and decisively.

'My dear boy,' said the Banker, assuming his most urbane tone, 'why all this? You are our advocate, why become our judge, and a stern one too?'

'Uncle Fairlie, if elected, I become representative and trustee for the whole country. It would be a swindle upon my part to get public money misappropriated, really to buy a seat in Parliament for myself.'

He spoke emphatically, as he saw that Mr. Fairlie did not realise his difficulty.

'Well, you see,' said the Banker, turning round to the table and adjusting and readjusting the big blotting-pad, just as was his custom when he was conducting some troublesome financial arrangement (for the matter now began to appear to him in a more serious light than it did at first)—'you see each constituency must speak through its Representative. They tell him what they want. He tells the Government. The Government have the responsibility of deciding. In court you know the lawyer defends the murderer; he puts the case as well as he can. You were near being in the law yourself.'

‘Ah yes, but let us look at it fairly. The cases are quite different.’ Frankfort spoke on rapidly in his anxiety to say all that he wanted. ‘The cases are quite different. The advocate is known not to pledge his own opinion. If the Representative were admitted to be a mere advocate, it would be an honest business, though a petty one. But what is the fact? He would be no use unless he professes and pretends himself to believe in the justice of the demands that he makes, and he must use his public position to advance them. How am I to urge on this Reservoir “hammer and tongs,” as you say, to bully the Government, to pawn my political influence for it, and wire-pull with other districts? And for what? Working hard for my constituents is the phrase, and so to be sure it is. But why for them? Not truly for any special love I have for them, or for their Reservoir, but to secure a seat for myself in the House of Representatives and £5 a week salary. It’s no use; I could not do it.’

During this rather long harangue the Banker had sat at the table listening, with outward composure, to his nephew’s impetuous remarks. Long custom had given him the habit of hearing, without apparent perturbation, the most serious and disturbing statements. Before him was a substantial paper stand containing blank cheques upon all the banks in the Province. He had often reached over to these in discussions with clients and others, about reducing overdrafts, discounting bills, strengthening accounts, starting new enterprises, meeting, or partially meeting, long-standing liabilities, and other delicate and critical financial operations. He would say: ‘You might as well sign a cheque for the amount; as further security, you know. Of course it needn’t be used.’ Or ‘Perhaps it would be better if you would give us a cheque to hold, just to strengthen your position.’ Or ‘Half bill, half cheque might be the simplest way, don’t you think?’

On this occasion also, while his nephew was speaking, the Banker reached over and took out a cheque; but not for the purpose of challenging his visitor in any such manner as we have indicated. He slowly tore it up into exceedingly small pieces. These he gathered together in one little white

heap on the solid and polished surface of the Bank parlour table, and round this little heap he placed a few of the bits in a circle with regular intervals between them. It might be taken to represent planets circling round their sun; or, to look at it in another way, hungry hounds closing round a stag at bay. When Frankfort had finished his rather impassioned declaration of his principles, the Banker, closing up to the table with a business-like shrug of his shoulders, as if he were now going to finally dispose of this matter, began—

‘That’s all very well, Edward; but now let us come to the facts. You see that little heap there?’

‘Certainly.’

‘And these little bits all round?’

‘To be sure I do.’

‘Well, then,’ he continued, ‘the little heap in the middle is the five millions that the Government are hoping to get by the Loan they are trying to float. These little bits right round are all the constituencies in Excelsior, baying away for as much as they can get out of it. The voice to do the baying for each constituency is the Representative. Now, you can’t change this system; you can’t do so at once, at least. Indeed, you don’t pretend to. But you say to this little hungry hound—Brassville, we’ll call him—“Come, my brave little man, have me and high principles and let the quarter of a million go to Leadville, or to some place on the other side of the Divide.” Now, I ask you, as a man of some common-sense, can you expect us to agree to that?’

‘You put the case only for Brassville—true, you can ask for anything. I have to think for myself; am I to pledge myself to anything?’ remarked Frankfort.

‘Well, *we* must think for ourselves and our means of living. The thing speaks for itself. A quarter of a million spent here makes this place. The labourers, the farmers, the artisans, the shopkeepers, the landowners, the merchants all have an immediate personal interest in it. And the vote of all governs. No privileged class here to check the general wish. They will all be richer if it goes on—poorer if it does not go on. Bankers too—some of our accounts here are rather shaky. That sum of money pouring in and

enriching all would set up most of my constituents and relieve me of a good deal of anxiety. I dare not, in the face of my Directors, support a man who would send it all away to Leadville or Silveracre. I must think for your aunt and the youngsters, as well as for the country at large. As a fact, I cannot afford to stop and consider whether your principles in the matter are sound or not. No, Edward, if you go forward, condemning the Reservoir, I'll vote and work all I am able for Meeks—much as I despise the man.' He added, as he drew back from the table a little and looked straight at his nephew, 'I'm rather taken aback by all this.'

So was Frankfort. He sat silent for a few moments. He felt that he was in the jaws of it now. If his kind uncle would work for Meeks, what could he expect of the rest?

And yet he saw the situation at a glance. He was to sell his soul to gain his seat. He could not do it. What would his old companions, with whom he had so often maintained that high principle and noble purpose were essential to any true political life—what would they say if they were to see him begin with a notable job? What would they say of him? Nay more, what would he say of himself? And what would be the value of a public career to a man of his nature if, to gain it, he had to lose his own individuality?

O ye many-sided troubles and perplexities of us poor men, likened as we are by the poets to the leaves of the forest, ever trembling, often falling! The solemn-looking clock ticked on solemnly. The sombre room grew darker in the deepening shades; the portrait of the Chairman looked more and more grave in the growing obscurity, as these two men sat facing one another, in mutual perplexity. Many grave, not a few distressing, interviews had from time to time taken place in this very room. Tradesmen begging for support to save them from failure; sanguine speculators clutching at some last chance, that would at length make their fortunes and end their cares; ruined men begging for forbearance, in whose shady mishaps the keen scrutiny of the Banker was laying bare fraud mingling with their

misfortunes. But here was a new kind of trouble—one with a tragedy all its own.

Frankfort was resolved what to do. He would go to his meeting, declare the truth about the Reservoir, and fall fighting for the right. But he saw that his uncle was somewhat moved by this, to him, new development; and he felt that it would be only considerate not to announce himself absolutely on the moment. So he only said:

‘Thanks, uncle, for your frank expressions and saying so plainly how you look at it. If you could not go for me, who could? I have to go over to the hotel now. I will send you a line before the meeting, telling you what I have finally resolved.’

As they came out into the hall, they met Mrs. Fairlie and the children, who had just returned from The Blocks. Mrs. Fairlie urged her nephew to stay to tea with them, but he had little time to lose, as Quiggle was to come for him at a quarter to eight o’clock, and he had several things to settle before then.

Young Edward, the sprightly son of the Banker, aged nine years, called out from the stairs as he was beginning to go up—‘Cousin Ted, cousin Ted, Eilly Lamborn says I was to tell you that you’re to get the Reservod, and then I’m to sail my boats in it; only Eilly says I mustn’t get drowned in it. I’ve two boats and Minnie’s only got a little one.’ Master Edward, as he walked up the stairs, completed his information, by bawling out at the top of his voice—‘Minnie’s is a little one, and it won’t float neither. Only don’t tell her so.’

As our would-be politician hurried away to the Lake Reservoir Hotel, he muttered to himself, ‘I’ll be the first to be drowned in the confounded thing. . . . The very child in the nursery, and, gracious heavens! that young girl, Eilly Lamborn, begging for this cursed thing too!’ In all the tumult of his thoughts, he could not help this last idea rushing in upon him, though it was absurd, for what could it matter to him whether Miss Lamborn chimed in with the rest or not?

He got to the hotel depressed in spirit, but determined upon his course. He would go to the meeting and fight it

out. Was there a chance that, if he clearly explained to them that they would get a full supply of water by means of the tunnel, according to Blanksby's plan, and at the same time escape the crushing rating that the quarter of a million would necessitate, they might come round? No, it really seemed to be hopeless. So he thought it would be right to send a note to the Honourable Mr. Dorland, the President of his University, informing him that he had found it impossible to support the Reservoir at Brassville, and that therefore there was so little hope of his success that he would not have to claim the full extent of his leave from College work, as he expected to return immediately after the polling day, and possibly before. He marked his note 'private,' as being for the present only for the President's own information.

Having sent it off to post, he was writing a hurried line to his uncle telling him what he had determined, when he heard the mellow tones of Myles Dillon on the landing outside his door. As well as he could distinguish, Dillon was endeavouring to persuade the housemaid to get one of the large baths partially filled by means of a bucket by the morning; while that young person adhered to her old opinion on the subject, and declared that nothing of the kind could possibly be done until something else happened first. Though he did not clearly hear, he could not for a moment doubt what was the event to which the deprecating remarks of the young person pointed. When Dillon came into the room he turned round to take off and shake his coat—the dust was bad at Brassville—saying as he did so—

'There, now, I've tried again, and I can't persuade that young lady out there that half a bucket is better than no bath. I wanted her to get a drop or two brought up by the morning; but no, nothing can be done in the new bathroom, she says, at present; we must wait for the inauguration of the great National work of the century, the Reservoir. However, you're all right meanwhile; in you sail on it. They all remark—say they to me—— But what's wrong wi' you? You're not making your will there on that sheet of paper, are you?' He said this as he looked round from shaking his coat, on Frankfort's troubled countenance.

'Fact is, Dillon, I'm done for this time—this election.

I can't stand this Reservoir.' He spoke as he did to Mr. Fairlie—emphatically. He had not much time to lose. Quiggle would be calling for him in less than an hour.

'Why, what's the matter with it?' asked Dillon, quite staggered. 'I thought it was the Pride of the Mornin' with Brassville.'

'It's a rank job, Dillon.'

'Well, well—but in politics, you know now, there are at times such things, by the way, you know, *entre nous*, as the French say.' He was rather perplexed how to go on. He had heard something to the same effect in casual conversation with Lavender, but he was taken by surprise at his friend's emphatic announcement, as Frankfort had not disclosed his feelings upon the subject before. He did not want to aggravate the serious nature of the position into which things had got. Even he could see that his friend's candidature was hopeless if he made such an announcement at the coming meeting. So he went on talking, being certainly at sea upon the subject, though by no means going 'easy before the wind,' as Quiggle would say.

'Why, Edward Fairlie, you take me fairly aback, you do now. It's all up if you talk in that style at the Town Hall just now. Dear, dear, how's it come about? An' I was looking for you to get me a good place under Government when you wrote M.H.R. after E. F. F.'

'No joking, Myles, it's too serious! I delayed deciding till I got all the facts and had talked the matter over with Mr. Fairlie. It won't do. How can I link my start in public life with jobbery and make-believe and the abandonment of political principle? I don't care to be a mere tool—a hack—like poor Meeks—a political bagman, as they call him, and not honest at that. Why, Myles Dillon, when I think of the high aspirations that used to animate us young men as we talked of true politics by the wayside, on our summer walks there in the old land—the nobleness of the public career, the high purpose of public life——'

Myles saw that the situation was desperate. He rather regretted to himself that his friend had ever thought of stepping out from the calm atmosphere of the University. He had had a feeling of that kind all along. But he

deeply sympathised with him in his present perplexity. In graver tones than usual, and with a sympathetic air that he rarely assumed, he sat down right opposite Frankfort, saying—

‘Well, well, now, Edward Fairlie, let us have a little quiet talk over this. You’ve got to go to this meeting pretty soon, so you’d better give the thing a final turn over in your mind. You see I look at it this way, when a man has to act under a system he must make the best of it. No one can get just what he wants under any system; he gets as near as he can. He must then act under it, or not act at all——’

Here he was interrupted by hearing Tom Hilton, the landlord, talking to some one in loud and agitated tones, as he hurried up the stairs. Hilton never stood much on ceremony with his guests; and now he burst straight into the room without preface or introduction.

‘Why, here’s a go!’ he exclaimed, flourishing a telegram in his hand—‘here’s a go! Well, I never——’

‘What’s the matter, landlord? There is not a fire anywhere about, is there?’ Dillon asked quietly.

‘What’s the matter? Why, here’s the news just come down from town, and blessed if the five million Loan hasn’t gone and failed. Water Policy of Government withdrawn—everything slides, upset, obfuscated, undone. Where are we now? I ask——’ gasped Mr. Hilton, unable to find words in this crisis.

‘Well, well,’ said Dillon. ‘Dear me, now, that’s bad.’

‘Bad? why, sir, there’s the Reservoir gone again till—— Here we’re out again. If that Meeks had got us in the last——’

‘You wouldn’t be after making a bit of a Reservoir just for yourselves, ye know?’ said Dillon, nodding in an inquiring manner.

‘Make a Reservoir ourselves? Where’s the money? I can’t understand what you——’

‘The infirmity is mutual, landlord,’ remarked Dillon, looking up at Mr. Hilton with the simplest air possible. ‘For I was only thinking now of what I saw in the papers there, that the Reservoir would pay six or seven per cent, and you might

get the money for that, ye know—ye might now—these times money so cheap, ye see.'

The landlord glanced at Dillon for a moment. He understood he was a medical man, and concluded that he was connected with the Lunatic Asylum, and a little touched himself. However, he had no time to lose, so he flung himself out of the room and down the stairs, eager to discuss the disastrous intelligence with his agitated fellow-citizens in the street.

When he was gone Dillon got up and carefully shut the door, which Mr. Hilton, in his excitement, had left half-open. He then turned to Frankfort, who had said nothing, being for the moment quite taken aback by the complete change in his position that had been made by the failure of the Loan and the withdrawal of the Government Water Policy and all its works.

'Teddy,' said Dillon, 'you're in luck this time.'

'Well, Myles, I certainly see that a great difficulty has been removed,' answered Frankfort, at the same time tearing up the half-written note to his uncle. 'To be sure, all these Brassville people will be rather disappointed——'

'Come now, Teddy, that'll do. None of that with me. Keep those polite remarks a few minutes till you're addressing the free and independents. It's a queer elector of Brassville I'd be. I'd vote for you, Reservoir or no Reservoir. No, Teddy, don't forget to sacrifice fat hecatombs to the Fates to-night for gettin' you out of such a hole.'

'Yes, from all they tell me I ought to beat Meeks now,' replied Frankfort.

'How can you help it, Edward Fairlie? Instead of your being drowned in the Reservoir, Meeks will be smothered in the Beer, as I heard several intelligent citizens say on Saturday. Bye-bye, Teddy, I'll leave you now. I must go back to have another look at this bugler boy in the Hospital. Nasty wound those Border Natives give. His pulse was a bit high when I left. If he's all right, I'll have a look round at your meeting. I want to ask you a question.'

'A question, Myles?' inquired Frankfort, who had scarcely collected all his wits about him, after the crisis he had gone through.

‘Yes, I’ll just want to ask the candidate if he’ll pledge himself to resign his seat if he don’t get a special loan of half-a-million for the Brassville Reservoir to be floated at once. That’ll give you an opportunity of airing those noble principles of yours.’

‘All right, Myles,’ said Frankfort, now recovering his spirits. ‘I’ll tell Quiggle to have one of the boys ready for you with his shillelah, just as you stand up.’

It turned out as Dillon had said. The Reservoir being out of the way for the present, there was nothing to save Meeks from being smothered in the Beer. Indeed, the indignation against him for not getting Brassville into the first Loan was rendered more inexorable than ever by the failure of the present one. Here they were, argued the public of that city, with the Reservoir again indefinitely postponed; whereas, if the Member had been alert and resourceful, they might have been provided for in the last Loan, the great work already in progress, and the non-success of this Loan a matter of perfect indifference to them. The general public were thus implacable against Meeks, and this left him quite at the mercy of the party of Gazelle and Co., that condemned him perhaps even more bitterly for his enormous treason, as they considered it, to their cause. The accusation, or even the suspicion, that his vote upon the momentous Beer question was the result of some quiet arrangement with the Empire Palace Hotel Company, Limited, was fatal, as far as they were concerned. Indeed, Miss Gazelle was possessed of a moral conviction that he had the money, though, when challenged for the facts upon which her belief rested, it would appear from her replies that it was founded rather upon faith than upon knowledge. It was certainly unsatisfactory, not to say unfair, to poor Meeks. At one of his meetings he challenged that lady to bring forward her evidence. Her only reply was, that *he* knew all about it. If he did not, who did?

Our politician lent no countenance to the slander, and Quiggle himself kept very quiet about it, as he felt assured of success ‘without anything unpleasant on our part,’ as he remarked to his committee. The *Trumpeter* continued to denounce the old member in each issue, three times a week,

regularly ; and it rather taxed the literary resources of the editor to find a sufficient variety of language for the effective treatment of the same aspect of the subject. The indignation against Meeks became so intense, immediately after the failure of the Loan was announced, that the *Scorcher* had to abandon its Bunyan's Waterman's attitude, and the editor, who was partial to illustrations from Shakespeare, had to admit, in an important leader, 'that fortune was flitting from the standard of Meeks, while the very stars in their courses were fighting for the meteor flag of Frankfort.'

So it turned out on the polling day. Our politician was returned by a large majority over his opponent. He took his good fortune, as the reader will expect, without any undue expression of exultation, and, in particular, he was careful, in moving the customary vote of thanks to the returning officer, to make a civil reference to Meeks. That gentleman was present, and stood forth to second the motion as part of the sad day's work. He did not seem to be embittered by the accusations and slanders levelled at him. He still took off his hat respectfully to Miss Gazelle, and included Mr. Seth Pride in the returning sweep as he was placing it on his head again. He bore malice to no man, and of course not to any woman. It was all in the day's work. He quietly observed to Quiggle, just as if he was saying something about the weather, that he, Quiggle, had worked it up admirably for his man, and that, as for his placards, some of them were works of genius. The election did him credit ; but he doubted if he would find it so easy the next time. In seconding Frankfort's motion, he said that he acknowledged the honourable way in which his opponent had conducted the contest, assisted by his esteemed friend Mr. Quiggle. He wished him every success as a Representative in working for the district, so long as he did represent it. 'But, Mr. Returning Officer,' he went on to say, 'I shall feel it a sacred duty to this noble constituency at the first opportunity to again present myself for its honourable service ; and let me say, sir, that I have a conviction, as sacred as is my personal faith as a man' (here he laid his hand impressively upon his breast, bowing low as he did so), 'that when that opportunity arrives I shall be

returned once more to occupy the proud position of Member of Parliament for Brassville.'

There is in every crowd of men descended from or connected with the Saxon race a certain sympathy with those who are down; but some of the electors could not help relieving their feelings at the audacity of Meeks by hurried remarks to one another.

'The impudence of that fellow to talk of again representing us—putting out our man. It's positively heroic,' remarked Hedger, the lawyer, to Dr. Delane and a few others who stood around smiling at poor Meeks.

'He's off his head a bit,' said the Doctor; 'enough to make him. How's he to live unless he can get back?'

'Don't know about that,' half spoke, half croaked Neal Nickerson, the schoolmaster, who had given his boys a half-holiday in honour of the election, and was come down to hear the result of the poll—'don't know about that. Stranger things have happened,' he croaked out, as he edged himself in among the upper-class circle.

'There goes old Nick again,' solemnly remarked Mr. Hakes, the man of many acres but few words.

'He will be talking, my masters,' said Hedger, drawing himself up straight, as he turned, with a slight look of contempt, upon the doubled-up figure of the schoolmaster, putting his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat as he did so.

They all laughed again, and closing round Frankfort, who had just stepped down from the hustings, congratulated him as Member of the House of Representatives of Excelsior for the important constituency of Brassville.

CHAPTER V

AFTER THE ELECTION

FRANKFORT had thus become a member of the legislature of an intelligent and a progressive people. We can imagine the feelings of satisfaction, almost exultation, which fill one who is possessed by a true ambition as he realises the fact that he has become the exponent of the ideas and the spokesman for the wants of his fellow-citizens. And our politician held the principle that, once elected, he represented the whole country ; though, to be sure, he also recognised his legitimate obligations to the particular district that returned him. Certainly he had met with some disillusionising experiences concerning the manner in which the relation of the Representative to his constituency on the one hand, and to his country on the other, was coming to be regarded by the public. But he remembered that, while all forms of human government were full of imperfection, from whatever aspect you viewed them, it was the peculiar characteristic of Democracy to show its defects right upon the surface, and also to learn by experience how to remedy them. He had met, and no doubt he was to meet, the more noisy and lighter elements of the political stream, who sported upon the top, while the great volume of the waters moved on quietly and steadily below. And as for himself, and how far the new conditions of political life suited him, must not men often make careers for themselves adapted to new surroundings ?

It was known that he was going to stay for some days at the Lake Reservoir Hotel, in order to become more fully

acquainted with his new constituents. The first thing that attracted his attention, when he came down to breakfast a few mornings after the election day, was the large heap of letters that lay upon the table awaiting his attention. Compared with the two or three that he used to get daily at the University, it was quite a new and rather an exciting experience. One of the first that caught his eye bore the broad stamp of the University on the envelope. As the reader will remember, he had written briefly to the President immediately after the interview with Mr. Fairlie, telling him that his prospects of election were hopeless, owing to his not being able to support the demand for the Reservoir. The following was the Honourable Mr. Dorland's reply :—

THE UNIVERSITY, PRESIDENT'S CHAMBERS,
9th October 18—

MY DEAR PROFESSOR—Take my hearty congratulations upon your election, of which we have just had news by wire ; but more upon your noble stand against the Big Job. It is one good that the failure of the Loan has done, but not the only one. Our true policy in Excelsior is not borrowed gold, but home silver. Continue, young friend, brave and true to principle, as you have begun ! The wife orders me to send her compliments, and to say that you and she will quarrel if you do not dine with her, first among your friends, upon your return to the city.—Your faithful friend,

WILLIAM DORLAND.

He was pleased to get such a kind note from the President of his University. At the same time, he could not get out of his head what Blanksby, and also Mr. Fairlie, had said about the proposal to have the Reservoir near the great mines at Silveracre. The reference to home silver he did not fully comprehend, as, though he knew that there was a great silver and currency question simmering in Excelsior, it was quite a speculative discussion as yet, and distant from the sphere of practical politics.

As for the rest of the letters, they related mainly to local affairs. He was surprised to find what a number of Cricket Clubs, Rowing Clubs, Tennis Clubs, Racing Clubs, Hare and Hound Clubs, and General Sports Committees were anxious to do him honour. They all asked him to become Patron, or President, or at least Vice-President. The Mechanics'

Institutes, Free Libraries, and Literary Associations generally were equally numerous, and equally desirous of having his name identified in this dignified manner with their institutions ; while the charitable bodies and the churches naturally looked for his patronage. At the same time, several of these institutions were in some financial perplexity that presented certain broad lines of similitude. Either they were actually in debt, or they were making a special effort to avoid getting into that condition ; or there was an old debt, for which the present management had no moral responsibility, but which yet they were honourably anxious to discharge ; or else they did, in fact, desire to borrow for some indispensable purpose, which could be attained by a loan, if supplemented by adequate subscriptions.

Then there were the letters which came from people who had learned to cherish a comprehensive trust in their Government. The settlers in the Cote Cote Valley wrote to ask when the Government were going to drain their land ; or were they to leave the land after the Government had put them on it ? The members of the Tum Tum Fox Club informed the Member that the Department had sent them down rifles to help to destroy the foxes, but where was the ammunition ? Did they expect them to kill the foxes without ? An indignant parent complained that he did not get the full allowance of sixpence a week per child for bringing his children to school over the limit fixed by law for the allowance—though the road was so bad that he had to put a pair of horses in the trap to carry them. A comparatively poor widow wanted a place for her daughter as a typewriter, or something respectable, as she could barely make ends meet now with the price of things and the high wage for the house-help. The Art Association of Brassville wanted slight assistance from the Government, or somebody, to enable one of their number to make a painting of the charming copy of Raphael's 'La Giardiniera' that was in the Public Gallery, Miranda. Barney Clegg, proprietor of the Brown Jug Inn, with whom our politician became more fully acquainted thereafter, wrote for some simple wants of his own. His name, though he had been, he said, often recommended for the honour, had not yet appeared in the

roll of Justices of the Peace ; nor had his delicate son, Larry, got the easy place in the police that had been promised to him. His daughter Jenny was still teaching in the State school at a ridiculously low wage. He concluded by observing that even old Meeks had not done badly at times, and by adding, 'so now you may excill him.'

There were two letters, however, which impressed him somewhat differently from the others—the one agreeably, the other more seriously by its direct, not to say peremptory, tone, as being the missive of a potentate in politics.

The more agreeable one was as follows :—

THE BLOCKS, 10th October 18—

DEAR MR. FRANKFORT—Mother wishes me to write to you and send her congratulations. She says that you and father are brothers now, being both legislators. She hopes to see you often at The Blocks, as now that you are our Member she says that she has several things to ask for—the mid-day train especially, and about the high duty on sealskin cloaks from London. She bids me to put down what I want ; but I want nothing, so remain, yours sincerely,

EILEEN LAMBORN.

P.S.—I just add a line to Eilly's note to say how heartbroken I am about the Reservoir, and so is Mr. Lamborn. He says it all comes of that Mr. What's-his-name not having got us into the first Loan. Eilly and I are going to Miranda to-morrow. She has persuaded me to go by that horrid morning train. We hope to return in a few days, so come and see us then.

ANNIE LAMBORN.

The other letter was brief and to the point :—

THE GORGE, 15th October 18—

E. F. Frankfort, Esq., M.P.

DEAR SIR—Could you favour me with an interview on Wednesday at 10.30, on my arrival at Brassville by morning train?—Very respectfully,

NORRIE SECKER, *General Secretary*

Central Executive National State Workers' Association.

While he was getting through his heap of letters, Quiggle came in to make arrangements for the week that our politician had decided to spend among his constituents,

going about under the guidance of his faithful and now victorious agent. He knew from experience how useful Quiggle would be in making him acquainted with those electors whom he might not have met yet, or might have met only casually, and in enabling him to learn the relative importance and also the special views of those various local celebrities who play so important a part in the political affairs of each district. A day or two was to be spent in the town, seeing the municipal authorities and the representatives of public institutions, and then parts of the country about would be visited and certain individual electors met, who had become accustomed to and looked for this recognition of their importance.

'Good morning, Mr. Quiggle. Hope Mrs. Quiggle is quite well,' said our politician cheerfully, as the agent stepped in. He felt the vast difference which lay between canvassing electors for their votes before the election and discoursing with them for the sake of courtesy or better acquaintance afterwards. 'What is the pressing thing now? See His Worship the Mayor, I suppose, and then the Committee of the Free Library—the Hospital people later on.'

'Yes, Mr. Frankfort, sir, that is all right and plain sailing,' answered Quiggle; 'easy going, straight before the breeze. But the point is about meeting Secker. He will be here to-morrow on his rounds from Great Gorge. He met Bunker there on his way to the city. Did him; on to you next. He takes in this country-side this trip.'

'Secker—yes; but how do you mean—done Bunker—all the country-side? Yes, I have a letter from Secker, General Secretary National State Workers, requesting interview; rather peremptory, too. What am I to meet him for?' asked Frankfort.

He was struck by Quiggle's serious aspect as he replied—'Ah, that's just it, my dear sir—wants a little reckoning up to find the right latitude and longitude too—where we are when we meet Secker—Secker Secretary, we call him. It's rather a tight thing to meet Secker Secretary—it is indeed. You're in this time—no use backing Meeks against you this time. But as to next time, ask Secker Secretary.'

Why, he's the Secretary, and, between you and me and the telegraph wire, he is the real engineer, of the Central Executive of the State Workers' Association of Excelsior! It takes in the whole lot—Clericals, Trams and Rails, State Schools, Police, Post Office, Asylums. Bless you! if they are against you,—why, you may make your last will and testament,' said Quiggle, looking up at Frankfort and nodding emphatically. 'But he is fair enough, too, is Secker Secretary, in his way—live and let live,—particularly let him and the Workers live.'

'And what is he going about for, then?' asked Frankfort. 'What does he want with me?'

'Plain enough, my dear sir. He goes round after each election consulting with the local Branches of the S.W.A., and fixing up the new Members about the rights of the State Workers. He left it to Brickwood to see to you here. And he has done it, hasn't he? Yes, we have seen something during the week of Hiram. But Secker Secretary generally hits it off fairly well with the Members, I can tell you; but if he can't hit it off with any one, why then——'

'Why, then, I suppose he must do without,' interposed our politician, not half relishing the way the agent was putting it.

'Quite so,' replied Quiggle, looking very serious, 'that's about it. He does without that man at the next election—hits *him* off, in fact. That's why I wanted you to know about him. Won't do to come to cross sticks with Secker Secretary, I can assure you, Mr. Frankfort.'

'I can't but think, Mr. Quiggle, that this presumed power of the State Workers' Association is exaggerated,' said Frankfort. 'If, to be sure, the whole State Service could be united to act as one man, that would be something serious indeed. But then they have poor and rich, high and low, in their ranks as well as the outside public. They have too their fair proportion of patriotic men among them, men who act from a sense of duty. But what points is he going to raise?—I would like to think over them.'

'Ah, there, that's it! That *is* the point I was coming to,' said Quiggle. 'It wouldn't do for me to neglect things. The moment that I heard that Secker Secretary was coming

on from Great Gorge, I looked in at Woodall's, and hunted up the back number of the *Miranda Rising Sun*, published some time before the election. Here it is. 'Full Report of Monster Meeting, State Workers.' You'll see their wrongs, grievances, claims, rates of pay—the way they talk. If you look through that you'll see some of what's what for the Workers; and it will save you from being lonely while I go to see to our fixtures.' And, laying the paper on the table, the agent departed to arrange for the interviews of the day.

Our politician, upon opening the *Rising Sun*, had his attention at once attracted by the report of the monster meeting, which was printed in bold type, and was introduced by a whole series of striking headings. He read as follows:—

STATE WORKERS.

GRAND DEMONSTRATION.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

MASS MEETING.

THE WORKERS SPEAK.

RETRENCHMENT RETRENCHED.

'THUS FAR AND NO FURTHER.'

A meeting of the State Workers was held in the City Hall last evening, summoned by advertisement by the Central Executive of the State Workers' Association, for the purpose of discussing and adopting a common platform for the State Workers. In accordance with the rules, the chair was taken by Major Stephen Trounce, the President of the Association.

The Secretary, Mr. Norrie Secker, read the notice convening the meeting.

The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said that the executive had thought it well, in view of approaching events, and in accordance with their previous practice at those periods, to call the State Workers together, so that they could give expression to their legitimate wants, and formulate a common basis for their just claims, for the impartial consideration of the public at the coming election. They were citizens and voters as well as workers, and the attitude of the various candidates to their claims would naturally form matter for their consideration afterwards. (Hear, hear.) They were forbidden by the State Regulations from taking part in political contests in any corporate capacity, and he trusted that they would all loyally obey not merely the letter, but the spirit of the regulations. (Hear.) They no more thought of dictating to the

Government than the crew of an ironclad would think of telling the captain how to navigate her. But even a crew at sea could state their grievances—(hear)—and they could put theirs before the authorities and the candidates in a constitutional way. And, what must not be overlooked, they had the constitutional right of voting, and if they all voted intelligently throughout the Province, and by quiet conversation influenced outside workers to assist the cause of Labour, then it became rather an important factor whom they voted for and whom they voted against. (Hear, hear.) They all knew that they were suffering a grievous wrong in all ranks of the workers, owing to the unjust rating and classification of the Service and the withholding of the yearly lawful additions to their wages, salaries, and allowances. It was said that the industrial depression of the country made it unable to pay those lawful additions, and that workers outside their ranks had to suffer even positive reductions in their incomes. (No, no.) Oh, he would not say 'No, no,' but he would ask was that depression their fault? Had they caused it? (Cheers.) He deprecated invidious comparisons; but he must ask, were the European holders of their State Bonds, who were drawing five or six per cent interest, told that times were bad and that they must take three or four per cent instead? (Loud cheers, and cries of 'Not much.') It was true that they were now one of the most highly-taxed communities in the world; owing, some said, but he would not say for a moment, owing to political mismanagement. But to whatever owing, were they (the workers) answerable; and as to taxation, did they not pay their full share as citizens? Was it right that they should be doubly taxed—taxed as citizens and then again as public workers? (Cheers.) He believed in Patriotism; but that was too much Patriotism—too much of a good thing. It overleaped itself and fell over to the other. (Cheers and laughter.) The policy of the shop was dollars, not development; that of the State should be development, not dollars. (Loud cheers.) The whole service should be regraded, and salaries and wages reconsidered. He did not mean degrading by regrading. No man should get less than he did now. (Cheers.) To restore increments and promotions was merely taking an unfair tax off the workers. He trusted that they would to-night display the same moderation and good tone that marked all their gatherings. (Hear.) They were within their rights in demanding their rights, and they all knew, and the public knew, what they could do if driven to extremities. He believed that they were all now resolved, as one man, to submit no longer to the denial of their lawful yearly increases to their pay. The Honourable Mr. Brereton had said that to pay these would require some £250,000 a year more. If so, that only showed how much they were done out of. (Loud cheers.) He counselled moderation. The Government, notwithstanding the

Bill of last session, now promised fairly. If they afterwards found that they were deceived by fair promises, they could not be blamed if they acted accordingly, and the great public would justify them, whatever political results followed. (Great cheering.)

The Chairman then called upon the various speakers, and it took some columns of the *Rising Sun* to report the various speeches made at this formidable gathering. And formidable it was, since the men there present were not merely electors, but electors who had a direct personal interest for which to fight at the ballot-box. The different speakers displayed not only intelligence in their arguments, but, when the subject was regarded from their point of view, a certain reasonableness in their demands. When, indeed, is it unreasonable for men to ask for good wages, duly limited hours of labour, and exemption from all harshness in discipline? Each small addition to a worker's wage, when the matter is brought into the light of day, seems so small and so just that no one can object,—certainly not the man who has a good income himself.

All the ranks of the State Service were represented. They were all there: from the men of the Trams and Rails, to whom were confided the lives of the people when travelling; from the School teachers, who were entrusted with their children; from the Police, who gave protection to men and to their property; from the Warders, who controlled criminals; from the caretakers of the asylums; from the numerous army of the Post Office; and the vast clerical department that carried on the details of the State business—they all came, and the spokesman from each spoke with that force which men display when they are pleading for their own personal wants. The representative of the Trams and Rails Branch was felt to have made a point when he observed that one good accident, brought about by the misadventure of an incompetent or overworked engine-driver, would cost the public more than the value of all their yearly increments put together. Again, was economy to be sought in public schools for the people's children—was it to be gained by starving the teachers? Or were the letter-carriers, who might have in their letter-bags the value of thousands, to be unfairly tempted with low wages? Retrenchment in

the State expenditure might be necessary, but should it be at the cost of the wage-earner? If the revenue was deficient, let it be supplied by taxation, that spread the burden over all; not by savings, that pressed only on the State Workers.

Resolutions were passed affirming the need for a new grading of the ranks of the State Workers; for providing by law a scale of yearly additions to salaries and wages; for facilitating promotion in the State Service; for providing a ready means of appeal by any aggrieved worker to the Minister of his Department.

So far the meeting had dealt with those who held positions in the permanent ranks of the Service, from the Professional Branch downward, and unanimity had prevailed, though, according to the report, a little restiveness was displayed when Mr. Evan Leigh, who represented the Clerical Branch, spoke. He complained of some new office regulations that had been issued, and which he denounced as belittling the Service. They were only allowed half-an-hour for lunch, and the time of going and coming had to be entered in a book; also their yearly holidays were unjustly curtailed. But, beyond a few jocular interjections, little notice seemed to be taken of Evan Leigh's grievances at the time. When the resolutions of the State Workers were disposed of, the daily-paid and casual men in the public employ were given a hearing; and as our politician read on through the report of the *Rising Sun*, he felt that a new side-light was thrown upon the subject.

The Chairman then stated that the next resolution would be moved on behalf of the daily-paid labourers and the casual workers throughout the State Service. Though not actually belonging to the National Association, the Executive had acceded to the proposal of their esteemed Secretary, Mr. Norrie Secker, that a full hearing should be accorded to them at the State Workers' meeting. Their views would be first spoken to by the Secretary of the Day Labourers' and Casual Employees' Union.

Mr. William Orchard, Secretary D.L. and C.E.U., desired to move: 'That this great meeting considers the classification of day labourers iniquitous, and protests against the low maximum of wage adopted, and appeals to the Cabinet and Parliament to revise the said classification and to place the toilers upon a more satisfactory basis.'

He could assure Mr. Evan Leigh that the difficulty with them was not about the lunch book, but the lunch. (Cheers from the lower end of the hall.) If they knew where to get the lunch, they would get it in even the half-hour. (Continued cheers from below.) As for promotions, he and his lot sympathised with them as well as they could, considering that for the day labourer, if he went up at all, he had to be kicked up, and if the foreman was against him, he was always kicked down. (Hear, hear.) He then wanted a priest or a parson or a member of Parliament to kick him up again. He would like to know why a day labourer on the railway lines, whether a casual or not, should only be able to earn eight or nine shillings a day, when, if he did his work carelessly, and left one rail loose, a train might go to general smash and kingdom come. Because the railways did not pay, were they to be sweated? (Hear.) They could get, they were told, labourers for five shillings a day. Well, they could get a head boss and manager of all the trams and railways for £500 a year—ten notes a week, not a bad wage either—and so save the £1500 extra that they now gave their respected chief. (Hear.) Better for the State to pay a living wage even to the weak and inefficient than to have them billeted upon the country as paupers. What was the use of their establishing Protection to keep up good wages in outside industries if the State treated its own workers like this? As concerns the holidays that Mr. Leigh had referred to, that didn't trouble them much. Holidays meant the loss of the day's wage to them, so he need not say that they were not very sweet on them. (Hear, hear.) He and his men were not, as the Chairman had said, part and parcel of the National Association; but they were willing to pull with them, so long as he and his mates were not left out of the swim. The poorest pick and shovel man had as good a cause to live as the best of them, and also had as good a vote to drop into the ballot-box as the Boss of his department had, or, for the matter of that, the Premier himself. (Cheers.) Another thing that they might find out, and when found take a note on, was that the lower down they went in the ranks of the workers, the more numerous were the voters. The Boss of the Trams and Rails had more than twenty times the salary that he had; but he and his men had a hundred and a thousand times the voting power of the Boss. (Cheers.) Some of the locos. on the rails advised them to wait for the Government Bill, and see what it was this time. He himself would be quite willing to wait on fifteen shillings a day. But what about the poor beggar that only got seven or eight? (Hear, hear.) He begged to move the resolution, and he would urge on them to give at the coming election a strong pull and a long pull and a pull all together. (Applause.)

Mr. Benjamin Jupe seconded the resolution. They at times

heard complaints that the workers went into the court and became insolvent. What was to blame for that but the system of wages that made them to? It was easy to keep out of court on £500 a year. It was the great difference between the labourers' wages and the clericals' pay, and even the skilled workmen's, that was at the bottom of the trouble. There were aristocratic classes coming along among the workers. (Cheers and 'No, no.' Some interruption. Cries of 'No divisions; justice to all.') Yes, that was his word, too, justice to all. He said ditto. It was very well for them to say 'No division,' with their twelve and fifteen shillings a day, ay, and some of them their five sovereigns a week; while he had to work the eight hours long for seven or eight shillings, and keep his wife and the children. He was known to be a hard-working man. He never drank, he didn't do much at the pipe. He brought all his wage home to the missus, and she saved and worked all she knew, he could tell them; yet they could scarce make it up to meet at the end of the week, with the five children. She used to do a bit of washing; but now the Chinese cut her out at that. He had faked out an old sewing-machine for her on the time-payment plan, and she had got a turn of cheap work at that. But now the Factory Inspector threatened to stop this, as she was not a widow and had a husband earning wages. He mentioned this just to show how the real poor were treated. (Hear.) Holiday, indeed! He wanted no holiday. They meant his wages less; but the children didn't eat less on holidays. Another thing—he was called an unskilled labourer. Who, he would ask, was a skilled labourer? He knew that upon his doing his work faithfully, as he always did his best to, the safety of trains depended. If a sleeper was left loose, there would be an almighty smash, he could tell them. (Hear, hear.) He and his mates were willing to pull together with them, so long as they all stuck up for a good living wage for every man and his family. Was that an unfair thing to ask? (No, no.) He didn't coddle to aristocracies in labour more than he did anywhere else. (Cheers from the end of the hall.) As for the Trams and Rails not paying, let them pay off the loans and float new ones at a lower rate of interest. If that would not do, let them take a bit off the big salaries. (Cheers.) Anything was better than to have the men who really did the work left without a fair wage and fair food. He knew he was a poor man. He had not the knack of climbing up. But a lot of them knew him. They knew he was no loafer. (Hear, hear.) He asked nothing for loafers. That was why he objected to the butt-gang system, as the idle lot and bad workers knocked down the average wage return for the lot, and this led to only the clever workers clubbing together. All he asked for was justice right round and right down, and as the casual pick and shovel man was as good at the ballot-box as the engine-driver on the footplate,

let him have an equal show for fairplay. He seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Here, according to the report, before the close of the proceedings, Mr. Norrie Secker, the General Secretary, came forward, by kind permission, as he said, of the Chairman, just to speak a few stray words. Our politician looked with interest to see what his formidable visitor of the next day had to say. And, as the speaker said, the words were few, and all offered with respectful deference to the meeting.

No one (Mr. Secker remarked) could add force to the demonstration of the justice of their cause which they had heard that evening. He only craved leave to make a remark about the best way for them to proceed. But, in passing, let him say that all which his esteemed friends Mr. Orchard and Mr. Jupe said had gone straight to his heart. He hailed them as brothers. Solidarity of labour was the principle of the age. They must be united, nay, they were united. The State Workers' Association was fighting the battle of those who were not State workers. If they gained fifteen shillings a day for the skilled worker, the unskilled was not likely to long remain at seven shillings a day. But to come to the best method of procedure, a matter which was somewhat within his province perhaps, he would venture upon a little piece of advice, if he might be so bold. Let them wait upon both the Honourable the Premier (Mr. Brereton) and the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition (Sir Donald MacLever) with copies of the resolutions passed at this great meeting, and let them wait upon them at the right time, and the right time was before the elections and not after. (Cheers.) They could hear what both honourable gentlemen said, and afterwards they could compare notes a bit. They could ask each honourable gentleman what he thought of their resolutions, and then afterwards, when they got their answers, why, then they could at the elections tell each of those honourable gentlemen what they, in their turn, thought of him. (Great laughter and applause.)

The motion was then carried by acclamation.

The Chairman, in closing the meeting, said that a slight note of discord had been struck by his friend, Mr. Jupe, but there was often truth got out of discord. They must all realise one another's wrongs and wants—(hear, hear)—and they must all have one another's support at the ballot-box. United they stood, he would repeat. He would only add that while all ranks of the workers had mingled here to-night on terms of perfect equality, officers and men, foreman and day labourer, to-morrow they would all resume their relative positions at their daily duties, resolved to do the public full justice, and, he would say, also resolved to get, by lawful, constitutional means, full justice from the public. (Loud cheers.)

A vote of thanks to Major Trounce for his able conduct in the chair brought the meeting to a close.

As our politician laid down the *Rising Sun*, he felt that the report which he had been reading afforded ample matter for mental 'chewing and digesting' before the promised visit of Secker Secretary. Complaints by those who have been called the working classes of their needs and wrongs were unhappily not new. But it was new that the wage-earner should be ruler and be able to prescribe terms to his employer. What he had been reading was not the appeal of a suppliant, but the claim of a potentate. It was better thus than to have the poor downtrodden, still, did it not remind one of the old system of Guilds, under which powerful corporate bodies established monopolies and taxed the rest of the people to support them?

While waiting for the meeting with Secker, Frankfort continued his visits in Brassville to important citizens, and had a formal interview with the Mayor and Councillors, in order to become acquainted with various local requirements, which had been somewhat overshadowed by the Reservoir, but which were now brought into prominence again. Next he arranged to visit the country around, so as to see several electors whom he had not been able to meet, or had only met casually before the election; still availing himself of Quiggle's services, as the agent's intimate knowledge of the people was useful, and his sensible advice and cheerful manner assisted in the smooth going of affairs.

He thought it only right to first visit his brother legislator of The Blocks, and at the same time to pay his respects to the Honourable Mrs. Lamborn and to Miss Lamborn, in case they should have returned from town. So, favoured by a fine spring morning, Member and agent drove out through the broad main thoroughfare of Brassville, receiving as they went many friendly salutations from constituents, who evidently admired the attention shown by the Member to the district, even after the battle was over. They intended, after visiting The Blocks, to continue the day's work in the neighbouring village of Glooscap, which was one of the most active political centres outside Brassville itself. They had made an early start, as Frankfort was anxious to get back in time to dine with his friend, Myles Dillon, who was coming up from town that evening, in

consequence of some troublesome complications that had set in in the case of the young bugler of the Border Rangers whom he had lately operated upon. The Government also had asked him to hold at the same time in Brassville the medical examination of some applicants for admission to the State Service. Myles Dillon never spared himself trouble about the smallest or poorest case that he had charge of, and was not satisfied while the least thing that could be done for a patient was left undone. He was as anxious about the bugler boy as he would have been about the General.

As soon as our politician and Quiggle had got past that bad bit of road opposite the gate to which Mr. Lamborn had called attention when Frankfort paid his first visit to The Blocks, they saw that gentleman himself busy in his fields, like a primitive monarch, ruling and directing his workers. As they drove slowly over it, Frankfort noticed that the Government help to put the road in proper condition had as yet been sought in vain, as the bad bit was still there, as bad as ever, and indeed naturally getting rather worse. Mr. Lamborn was superintending a party of men who were marking out long lines of narrow furrows inside the fence all along the grounds before the mansion. Rough and friendly was the greeting of the Senator, and warm his congratulations to his brother legislator upon his return to Parliament. In reply to inquiries after Mrs. and Miss Lamborn, he mentioned that they had delayed their return from the city owing to some special festivities that were going on, and would not be home for a day or so.

‘But it’s just as well so, Mr. Frankfort. We’ll have more time to ourselves for talking over things: business first and pleasure afterwards, you know; not as old Neal Nickerson says, satire-like, you know, “Pleasure first, business you can do any time.”’

Our politician felt disappointed, he scarcely knew why; but he consoled himself by considering that now he and the Senator would have the more time to talk over together the affairs of the nation.

‘The road ain’t fixed up yet,’ remarked Quiggle. He

considered it a matter of business not only to be acquainted with, but to take an interest in, the grievances of all parts of his constituency.

‘No. Now that’s where M’Ennery is not doing the straight thing by us. I am glad you mentioned it, Quiggle; that is one thing I wanted Mr. Frankfort to look into when he gets to town. When I was down last,’ continued the Senator, ‘I put it to him straight. “Mac,” says I, “I’ve always supported you, and, as Minister of Works, you ought to see this thing through. It’s a crying shame to leave the road as it is. We are willing to pay a third.”’

‘And won’t he help then?’ asked our politician.

‘Help? Why, he offers for the Government to pay only half and the Local Board the other half of fixing up the road right along. And a poor district like this too. Who uses the road, I would like to know? Why, the Government as much as any one.’

‘Ah well, I must look it up when I get to town. To be sure, the original Roads Act is for the Government to give pound for pound, main roads.’

‘Yes, I mind well enough when the Act was passed,’ said the Senator. ‘But see how the traffic has gone on increasing since. For one dray on the road then there are twenty now. Besides, lots of the other Boards get two-thirds; why should we put up with half? But, come along to the house; you can have another look at the road as you go out’; and, giving the buggy to one of the men, he and the two other politicians walked up through the handsomely-laid-out grounds, and were soon seated on the broad verandah.

Stretching out on every side around them were the spacious lands of The Blocks. To the observing eye of the lover of rural scenery, they were bright with all the newing beauty of spring. But still more pleasing was the prospect, to the practical eye of the owner, of the rich grass, covered with browsing cattle and sheep laden with fleece, with which he hoped to ‘top the market’ at the coming Spring Show and Sale at Brassville. Excepting towards the road at the gate, you could not see on any side the boundaries of the vast estate. On the three other sides there lay before your

view a long succession of grassy rises and gentle slopes, with occasional small flats of rich mould, all stocked with cattle, now up to their fullest carrying capacity, just before the sale. This yearly event was an important marking time for Mr. Lamborn in computing his income; for every year some thousands of pounds sterling, and at good sales many thousands, were added to it from this source alone.

'Pretty your little lake beyond there looks, sparkling in the sun,' said Frankfort, who, as the reader knows, was susceptible to the beauties of Nature. 'And the foliage of those English beeches round it is so rich bursting out with the spring.'

'Yes, and a pretty penny it cost me to dam up that lake too, I can tell you! And you see it's only half full. I would never have gone to the expense, only that I made sure of the Reservoir coming. With the Reservoir here beyond and a pipe down we could always keep it filled right up to there, you see, the line of the trees, the first circle of them. That's what Mrs. Lamborn and my daughter had set their hearts on. They are cut up about it more than me.'

'They don't bless Meeks, do they?' interposed Quiggle.

'Ah well, curses are not much in their line, or I know who would get a few. Why, when the lake shrinks in summer, we have to cart water for the trees. They cost too much to plant to let them wither now. Yes, to be sure, that bungle about the Loan has a lot to answer for.'

'What are your men sowing down there?' asked our politician, not much relishing this unexpected appearance of the Reservoir skeleton, and pointing to the foot of the green slopes where they were busily working away at the long stretches of furrows.

'There? We are laying down Brand's patent poisoned wheat for the rabbits. I have to lay it down all round the property to stop them, as they come in from the roads and reserves outside. That's the patent that there was the row about in the House last Session.'

'Row in the House?' queried our politician.

'Yes. Didn't you see it? Oh, I suppose you didn't attend to these things before as you will now.'

'To be sure,' broke in Quiggle, anxious to put his man in possession of the facts about a question that was such a live one in the district as the Poisoned Wheat Patent—'to be sure, that was when Billy Brereton, old B. B., cut up rough and said that the landowners should buy up their own wheat for poisoning. So he did, did old Billy—he got quite cross about it.'

'Yes, but worse than that,' said the Senator, 'he wanted to make out that it was none of his business to secure the patent for the Province. "No," says he coolly, "gentlemen, be pleased to purchase it for yourselves." That's just about the measuring up of what he said.'

'I suppose they think that you and Hilljohn and Le Fanu could clear your lands if you joined together,' suggested Frankfort.

'But not from the effects of a national visitation—visitation of Providence, you know,' answered the landowner. 'It's like a big fire over a district, or a total failure of crops. We always look to the Government then to help us out. Why, bless you! the rabbits are in millions.'

'You might give Brereton,' continued the Senator, 'a look in when you get to town. He will be about preparing his Estimates for the next year.'

'The best plan might be for the Crown to do its part and the landowners theirs,' replied our politician. 'I would like to hear what Brereton says about it. And Mr. Keech has asked me to see him about this school question. By the way, what do you think of that?'

'Better to build at once a new one at this end of Glooscap. The Department will find it the cheapest in the long run—cheaper than paying the parents for bringing their children over the three miles. Why, Jacobs told me that he was going to write to you about it. It takes him a trap and pair, and yet they dispute the sixpence per head.'

'Yes, he has written to me right enough. But I was thinking of the school question that has been started on us the other day, by the suggestion that Brereton made to the Churches' deputation to have the Bible read without comment. Talking of calling on him just reminded me of it.'

'Oh, that ; well, that's the old question up again,' said the Senator. 'I heard the wife and Eilly at it the other day over the report in the paper of the deputation. "It is the correct thing ; of course it is, Eilly," says she ; "teach the children their duty, and all that's right." "But who are to read the Bible, mother?" asks the daughter. "It's a spiritual book, and if the teacher does not believe in it himself, how can he make the children believe?" "Why, of course, they all believe in it," says the mother ; and so they arguefy away till I don't know what to think.'

'Well, it is a knotty point, but I confess I sympathise with Miss Lamborn's view, that religion must be taught by the religious,' remarked Frankfort.

'Yes, true ; that's it—just so. But if you come into the library I will show you the plans of the school they propose at this end Glooscap. You'll see it needn't cost the Department much.'

And the two legislators walked in to look at the plans, while Quiggle, who knew that they had a long day's work before them, went on to have the buggy ready at the gate. Soon after, our politician, finding that he was not getting much light upon the questions of the day, arose to go.

'What, off so soon? Well, it's early for lunch, and I suppose Quiggle has your work cut out. If you come round this side on your way down, I can show you the road a little higher up, so that you can speak from ocular demonstration when you see M'Ennery.'

So, after a good look at the bad bit of road, our politician mounted the buggy beside the alert agent, who was all eager to get away.

'Where do you make for now?' asked Mr. Lamborn.

'I am going straight on to Glooscap,' replied Frankfort, 'just giving a call on the way to your neighbour Hilljohn. Strange enough, I have never met him ; I did not see him about at the election at all, though I met the young Hilljohn at The Blocks one Sunday afternoon.'

'Oh, ah yes, Usher Hilljohn ; old identity about here ; one of us—though he some way seems to get boxed up in the other paddock now and then. He has been here

from the first, and bachelor still, just as he came from Ireland forty years ago.'

'It is odd that I have never seen Mr. Hilljohn,' Frankfort remarked to Quiggle, as they drove away. 'What sort of man is he?'

'To say the truth, I don't know him very well myself,' answered the agent. 'He is rather reserved, but he is a real gentleman, you know; and as for his servants and work-people, he is more like a father to them. He's got quite a colony of old 'uns and their families about him, and they say—would you believe it?' said Quiggle, looking round, and giving an emphatic dive into open space with his whip—'they say that he has provided in his will that after his death they are all to be kept on as before.'

'Yes, that's handsome and right too, as I suppose he can afford it, having this fine property and no family but his nephew.'

'That's it. Oh, he is, as I say, a real gentleman. And do you know, sir, there's truth in what I've heard say, that an Irishman, when he is a gentleman, is the genuine article—real tip-top.'

'Why, then, I should like to have a good talk with him,' said Frankfort.

'Not much time to spare for that, sir, and, besides, as for business, there ain't none with him—he wants nothing from nobody. He is quite in the other paddock, as Mr. Lamborn said. It's a sort of fad of his to have no grievance—beholden to nobody. It's a bit of a change to talk with him, as far as I know. But see what splendid country he has got,' said the agent, pointing from one side to the other, as they drove up through the broad acres to the old home station, which now, with a solid block of added front buildings, formed the mansion of the Hilljohn estate.

Soon they were at the door, and, in response to a lively ring from Quiggle, a comfortable-looking and homely-clad Irishwoman, past middle life, opened the door.

'Ah, here we are, Mrs. Coggan. I'm glad to see you so well-looking. This is our new Member, Mr. Frankfort, come to see Mr. Hilljohn and all of you. Is he at home?'

'To be sure he is, in the study beyont there,' replied Mrs. Coggan.

'Well, now, that's lucky. Just show the Member in, and send round one of those fine lads of yours, Mrs. C., to hold the trap, while I go and have a talkee-talkee with the respected Mr. C. I think I saw him in the home paddock just now, turning out the mail mare, you know. You know—the one that goes for the letters. No objection to that programme, Mrs. C., I hope?' said Quiggle, with his cheerful smile.

'Not the least, Mr. Quiggle, on the part of Catherine Coggan and may the talkee-talkee improve the two of ye, if there is any room for improvement, which I am far from laying down to ye, Mr. Quiggle. Come this way, Mr. Frankfort, if ye please.'

When our politician entered the study, Usher Hilljohn rose from the table, where he had been getting through a pile of letters, most of which were asking for money or favours of some sort. It was the mail morning, and Mr Coggan had just returned from the Glooscap Post Office, where Mrs. Garvin, the postmistress, made up a special bag on the arrival of the post for the Hilljohn estate. Frankfort saw rise to receive him a tall, gray-haired man, well past sixty, homely in his appearance and manner, yet withal having something even aristocratic in his bearing. He came of a good Irish family, and had received the education of a gentleman, as the phrase used to run; but having emigrated to Excelsior when a youth, he, after his long, lonely forest life, presented that plain, homely aspect that Frankfort had observed, which was not inconsistent with, but which yet imperfectly indicated, the high-toned man within. But there was even a slight touch of hauteur in his manner, which, however, was amply redeemed from all cause of offence by the unmistakably benevolent aspect which the full kindly eyes gave to the whole countenance.

'How do you do, Mr. Frankfort. I scarcely deserve the courtesy of your visit, as I must confess to have taken no interest in the late electoral affairs.'

'Yes,' replied our politician, 'I did not see you at all in Brassville during my stay, so I thought I would give you

a call on my way to Glooscap. You are not a very active politician then, Mr. Hilljohn?’

‘Well, I have taken part in some elections, and I would have you understand that I am a thoroughly loyal subject of the system of Government under which we live, and under which, I will add, we all enjoy so many benefits.’

‘Might I then ask, Mr. Hilljohn, why you took no part in the late contest for Brassville? From what I have heard of you I think you will readily understand me when I say that I ask not as a candidate looking for support, but as an inquirer seeking for information.’

‘To be sure, I quite understand your inquiry. Fact is, there were two or three things that kept me out of it. For one, though I knew little of Mr. Meeks, and never claimed his services, I was not disposed to join in hounding him down; yet I could scarcely range myself as one of his supporters. The system is more to blame than the man.’

‘The system?’

‘Yes, the system by which localities are taught to grasp from the Public Treasury all they can. And as to the Member—well, he is to bring back as full a bag from the general grab as possible.’

In his indignation, the Irish impetuosity which lay deep down in Hilljohn’s nature, covered but not all suppressed by his quiet exterior, had evidently outrun his natural courtesy and that consideration for the feelings of his companion which was instinctive in his nature.

‘You must let me say, Mr. Hilljohn,’ warmly responded our politician, ‘that, though I deplore the Government largess and representative agency business as much as man can, I absolutely deny that Members fulfil the functions that you attribute to them, or that constituencies are so wholly sordid as you appear to think. The thing is tempered by the sense of public duty of the representative and the forbearance of the constituency. For instance,’ he continued, as he grew warmer—‘for instance, I have never said a word in favour of this Reservoir scheme here, and, more than that, I may tell you that I had resolved, if the Loan had not failed, to have declared against it and taken my chance.’

‘No, truly, you don’t say that, do you? Both of us think alike then—see through the Reservoir? That does astonish me. For it was just the Reservoir that was another reason why I kept out of the whole thing. All the public people were going for it; I thought you and Meeks were at one on it, and that I would not care to work for either. Audacious job, to be sure!’

It was now our politician’s turn to be amazed. Of all the multiple appearances of this Reservoir, here was the most astounding. A leading elector, with broad acres to be watered, calling it an audacious job! Here was a unique experience indeed.

‘What! do you then condemn the Reservoir, Mr. Hilljohn? Why, they say it will add pounds per acre to the value of all the land about.’ Our politician had become so accustomed to the plain direct selfish view of the subject, that he could scarcely credit this condemnation of it by one of the beneficiaries. He was afraid that there must be some mistake, somewhere, which he would find out directly.

‘Well, perhaps it would,’ quietly replied his companion, ‘though that’s rather exaggerated. But, if the undertaking were to be carried out as promised, and the district to meet its liabilities honestly under it, the rating on the land would outweigh the value. It must be heavy for so great a work in a small district like this. It would at least be two shillings and sixpence in the pound. If it is meant to evade this liability, under plausible devices, prolonging times for repayment, reducing interest, writing off portions of the debt upon one excuse or another, refloating loans, funding liabilities, and so on—then, why, the fact is that, as a large landowner, I don’t fancy the thing. It becomes such a network of make-believe, sham, delusion, and humbug, that, personally, I would rather keep out of it.’

Our politician looked at this new specimen of the genus elector silently, with amazement. At last he broke out, ‘You must really allow me, Mr. Hilljohn, to express my admiration for the high and disinterested view that you take of this Reservoir question. I confess to you that it

quite takes me by surprise ; for it seemed to me that all the people, high and low, were for it, upon any terms or any pretence.'

'To be sure, nearly all are. And can you wonder at it? Can you reasonably expect people to deny themselves the filling of their own pockets when they have the chance, lest the general public should suffer? It's just like, in another form, the demand of the State workers to fix their own rates of pay. Why not? Would we not do the same in their place? To be candid with you,' continued Hill-john, with a slight laugh, 'the reason I feel as I do is because I can afford to be unselfish. I have a good property, and no one dependent upon me, except my nephew. If I had a wife and six children I should be like the rest.'

'But I thought it was bachelors who were selfish,' interposed Frankfort.

'Talk, my dear sir, talk — the commonplace talk of married people. The fact is, married people cannot afford to be unselfish. No, the most unselfish and public-spirited acts of the world have been done by single or at least childless men. But this is rather by the way, is it not, Mr. Frankfort? Coming back to what you said about all being for this Reservoir, the large majority certainly are. These you are always meeting as you go about in politics. You are always coming on the most demonstrative elements, and perhaps the most objectionable phases of what is called public opinion. It is a weakness in our political régime that this passes for the whole. There should be freer scope for independent ideas among the people, or else they will be apt to wither, like a numbed limb, for want of use. That is a danger that threatens Democracy.'

'Well, certainly, upon this Reservoir question if there are independent men, we do not hear much of them. Why, you are the only man I have met who objected to it. Woodall, the bookseller, who is quite a high type of elector, though he evidently did not believe in it, yet said that it was not for him to refuse it if the State would give it. There certainly are not many of you.'

'There are not many of us truly. Still, the active

politician rarely hears of even the few; they are blotted out for him—all seem to say the same thing, at least where local wants are concerned. That is what I wanted you to bear in mind.'

'There were some other matters that my brother legislator, Mr. Lamborn, mentioned, about Government buying the Poisoned Wheat Patent, and giving half contribution to the roads,' remarked our Politician, in some wonder and expectancy as to what new light he might get upon these matters from so independent a thinker as Mr. Hilljohn.

'Yes, well, as to those, of course I don't care to separate from my neighbours; but I don't really know that I can quarrel with Brereton there. I am afraid that we all get too much into the way of looking upon it as the proper thing to get all wants supplied by the Government. We regard the State as fair game, to be hunted down by everybody. Sometimes I fear that we landed property men in these young countries forget that old wise saw, that was spoken years ago in my native land, about property having duties as well as rights. I am for both. But come, we will be better outside this bright morning, and we can look at the property as we talk about it.'

And Hilljohn taking up his fowling-piece as naturally as he would his walking-stick—a habit that had been induced by the continuous warfare with the rabbits—the two walked down the front lawn towards a small hill, or knoll, that was beyond, upon the top of which was perched an old-fashioned cannon, such as might have come out of a man-of-war fifty years ago.

'You see my battery?' said the landowner. 'In the early days, when the natives used to be here in numbers, and at times to be rather troublesome, I got this old gun fixed up there as a note of warning to them—for its moral effect upon the native mind.'

'And did you find it to serve the purpose?'

'Yes, it did. It overawed the troublesome ones. But it could tell a curious experience that old gun if it could speak. You see, I was always fair to the blackfellows—never hunted them down—even at times defended them from the angry whites, when it was their turn to need

protection. So after a while they came to look upon my home station as a place of refuge, and in particular to believe that the big gun would protect them when they were chased, which it did, as I allowed no wholesale raids upon them here. Often I had half a tribe camped around the foot of the knoll.'

'They were at times ill-used then ?

'It is the old story,' answered Hilljohn. 'They would steal things, then they were hunted and killed, and then they would become really dangerous. Even the savage has his rude notions of justice. There is much the same thing going on now on the Border. There was an outbreak of the natives lately. You saw about it in the papers ?'

'Yes. Why, my friend, Surgeon Dillon, has been attending a bugler boy, of the Rangers, who got a bad wound. He and some of his company were surprised by an ambuscade. Dillon is coming up from town to-night to see how he is going on.'

'Ah yes, there again is work for you political men. The Border Rangers are quite out of hand—disorganised. The man killed and the boy wounded in that ambuscade were sacrificed to the want of proper control. The Government announce, I understand, that they are going to reorganise the whole thing. I hope that Parliament will support them. It is really too bad now.'

Here they were interrupted by Mrs. Coggan, who had followed them down.

'If you please, sir, I'll want a pair of fowls for to-morrow, if Mrs. Le Fanu is coming over.'

'All right, Mrs. Coggan, I will get them for you directly. Send down one of the boys for them.'

Frankfort was beginning to wonder by what conjuring arts the birds were to be produced, when they came opposite to the poultry paddock, and his companion, singling out two fat ones, soon laid them low with unerring aim from his gun.

'I generally kill this way. It's quicker and more merciful than hunting them about and chopping off their heads. Half the sufferings of animals in their killing is from fright. The thing itself is easy for man and beast.'

As they strolled on, a rough but comfortable-looking log hut came in view, at the other side of the little hill. Standing before it, smoking a large cigar made out of home-grown tobacco, was a venerable but strong-looking old native, whose rapidly-whitening hair stood out in contrast to the dark skin. His dusky spouse, also well stricken in years, sat on a log near, enjoying the solace of a short pipe.

'You see the King and Queen,' said Hilljohn—'King Billy and Queen Mary.'

'Was he really one of their kings?'

'Certainly he was in the early days; and rather a troublesome king too. But I made peace with him and treated him well, and he became quite attached to me. He does not do much, but he is good with the horses; only he will do nothing for any one but me. He considers himself a king still—and an impudent king he was at times too. I will never forget,' continued Hilljohn, with a smile, 'his impertinence about his marriage.'

'About his marriage? Is he married, then?' asked Frankfort.

'To be sure he is married; but not exactly as he at first wanted. It was this way. When I got him tamed and settled down, I used to bid him go to his tribe and bring in a wife, and I would provide the hut and rations and blankets and everything for the two. In that early time, you must know, we used to have emigrant ships calling at Leadville with consignments of pauper girls for domestic service—mostly my own countrywomen, indeed—and as each ship arrived there would be plenty of talk about it and the live cargo too among the station hands all around. So one day His Majesty told me that he would get married now. "Quite right," I said; "when will you bring her down? Just let me know, and I'll have all ready, parson and all. Whom are you going to get, Billy?" "Oh, Massa John"—as he always calls me for short—"oh, Massa John, I not 'tic'lar. One of those Irish girls do for me." The scoundrel!' Hilljohn continued; 'to insult my country to my face. But I made him take one of his tribe, and he has been good enough to her. They have got on fairly well together. The chief use he makes of her now is, when

he pays a visit to Brassville, to have her walk behind him, carrying the boots which he puts on, for the grandeur of it, when he gets to the town. Here, Billy, here is Mr. Frankfort, our new Parliament man, in the place of your old friend Mr. Meeks.'

King Billy advanced, looked quietly, but with keen, scrutinising glance at the new Member, took his cigar out of his mouth and remarked, in a quiet undertone, 'Missa Frank, Parleman man? A'rite. Dam lake. No go.' He then replaced his cigar and puffed away vigorously, as if for solace for loss of the lake.

'Ha! ha!' laughed Hilljohn, 'there again you see the force of public opinion about the Reservoir. You see, he is quite of the general mind upon the subject, only he can't manage the big word.'

'Well, it does show,' returned Frankfort, 'how a popular idea will diffuse itself, when we find this blackfellow just as full of the Reservoir as all the rest. I was struck when my little cousin, Teddy Fairlie, begged me to get the Reservoir, as he wanted to sail his boats in it. But this beats that. I don't seem to be finding out many of those dispassionate citizens yet that you referred to, Mr. Hilljohn.'

'Well, I can't say that King Billy is one of them,' said Hilljohn; and then turning to the dark figure, that continued smoking silently, 'Ah yes, Billy. No lake this time. You and Mary must wash in the creek still.'

'Ah, bah, picaninny wash,' was the reply.

'I am afraid that Billy is getting infected with the humbug of politics, when he sneers at the little wash in the creek,' Hilljohn went on, turning to his companion, 'for this I can certify, that if he and Mary had an ocean next door to them, they wouldn't wash a little finger in it.'

Here the prompt step of the active Quiggle was heard, as that gentleman hurried up, anxious to press on with the day's work. He knew that nothing of political value would be got from the stay with Hilljohn; so he remarked to Frankfort, after a respectful salutation of his companion, 'All the citizens of Glooscap await their Representative, sir, not to speak of those whom we will meet on the road.'

'Yes, yes, I must not keep you,' said the landowner.

'Business is business, is it not, Mr. Quiggle? Some time when you have leisure, Mr. Frankfort, come and spend a few days with me, and we can talk.'

'Just what I should like,' cordially replied our politician, who felt that the differences between them were such as would promote, not impair, conversation.

So they parted, and soon the buggy that bore Member and Agent was hurrying along the King's highway to Glooscap. Just as they were coming near the town, Quiggle exclaimed, in a cheery tone of voice, 'Ah, to be sure! I knew it! There he is!'

'Who is there?' inquired Frankfort.

'Why, of course, Jacob. Jacob himself, Jacob Shumate, the political shoemaker. I'm sure I don't know when he makes his shoes, for he is always in the streets. And he *can* talk. We must try and keep him right. Why, what are Lamborn and Hilljohn together on polling-day to Jacob? What are they? I ask. Oh no, my good sir, two to one on the outsider. Good day, Jacob. It's just our luck again meeting you so soon. Here's Mr. Frankfort, our new Member. He is a bit of a dab at talking, too, so you can run in couples a while. If you will get out, sir, and wrestle with Jacob,' said Quiggle aside to Frankfort, calling to mind his Biblical reminiscences, 'I'll take the trap down the street to the Red Parrot and be back again shortly.' Then, turning to Jacob Shumate, he added in an explanatory manner: 'While I am putting the ponies up, Jacob, you and the Professor can have it out.'

'I am much obliged to you for your permission,' answered Mr. Shumate, with a certain dignified reserve in his manner, as Quiggle, giving him a good-humoured nod, drove away.

Our politician, as he shook hands with the shoemaker, recognised the man who had passed Mr. Keech and himself so hurriedly in Brassville that he could only get a glance at him. He was, now that he had a full view of him, struck by his spare, almost attenuated figure, suggestive of privation and self-denial; his drawn, careworn face, marked with an air of anxiety and discontent; and his coal-black eyes, that glanced round in a manner at once searching and furtive. He was evidently a man with a grievance, and there is

often something wrong in the man with a grievance as well as in the world of which he complains.

'Glad to meet you, Mr. Frankfort. You are our representative man in the Parliament of the land.' He spoke with a certain laboured air of deference, as if continued oppression by the world weighed him down, but yet was by no means meekly acquiesced in by him.

'Thank you, Mr. Shumate—thank you. I am going round for the purpose of meeting and conversing with my constituents. I have seen my brother legislator, Mr. Lamborn, this morning, and I have just left Mr. Hilljohn.'

'Ah yes. Quite the aristocracy. Mr. Hilljohn is an aristocratic gentleman, truly. As for the properties, they are both princely,' and the shoemaker gave a keen glance at the new Member.

'The Blocks appears to be the better kept place of the two. Fine estate The Blocks,' remarked our politician, wishing to say something indifferent, waiting for Shumate, who was evidently only anxious for opportunity to launch out upon his favourite topics.

'Ah, you may indeed say so, Mr. Frankfort. It's forty years next month,' said the shoemaker, with a wearied air, 'since I and the gentleman who owns The Blocks came out in the same ship—the old *Argyle*—to Excelsior. We were both in the steerage. Single men, sir. But as the immortal Nelson, sir, once remarked, "Aft the more honour. Forward the better man." We compared well with the cabin set, for all the superficial advantages of their position, that we did, sir.'

'Why, a bad lot were they?' remarked our politician.

'Well, then, you had better ask the Honourable Mr. Lamborn. Though, perhaps, now that I think of it,' said the shoemaker, recurring to his deferential air—'perhaps he would not care to be reminded of his old voyage with Jacob Shumate. Possibly neither would his honourable lady. People in high life have short memories for the past.'

'But, however he came out, he has made a place and a name for himself now. I honour the man who rises by his own exertions—not born to the pillow,' said Frankfort in a decisive tone.

'That's all very well, sir; you have spoken very well,

sir, in one way. He has risen, as you say, sir, and made a place for himself, as you remark, but how has he risen? How, sir?’

‘He has done nothing wrong, has he?’ asked Frankfort, a little disturbed lest he should be on the eve of some startling revelations that would necessarily damage, in his estimation, not only his brother legislator, but by implication the family at The Blocks. He felt relieved when the shoemaker quietly replied, speaking very deliberately—

‘No, sir. He has risen by the wrong of society more than his own. He and I humped our swags, staff in hand, sir, to come up forty years ago to the wilderness here, and now look at him and look at me.’

And Shumate faced round, extending his arms, as he looked straight at his companion.

‘Well, to be sure, that’s it,’ remarked our politician, uncertain as to what aspect of the social problem the shoemaker was pressed with. ‘That’s it, to be sure. Some men have the knack of getting on: lucky fellows—one in a hundred, or rather one in a thousand.’

‘But how *was* it done? I ask, sir, how was it?’

‘Truly, I don’t know. How was it?’

‘By the social robbery of the people’s estate, the land,’ replied the shoemaker. ‘After a few years of bullock-driving, and of what you call thrift, or sordid scraping, he gets a lot of the forest at ten shillings an acre—ten shillings an acre, sir. Now it’s worth four or five pounds. I think that tells the tale how it was done,’ and Shumate looked round, this time fiercely.

‘But it was not worth four or five pounds then, was it?’

‘Perhaps not, sir. But who created the increased value? Not my distinguished fellow-passenger, but the public; yet he gets it.’

‘The public, Mr. Shumate, have not done it all. He has improved the land, cleared it, put his money into it. It might be asked also why did not you take up land too. You both started together. Society would have done the same for you.’

‘No, sir, it would not,’ replied the shoemaker in a positive manner.

‘Why not? You could have taken up land as well as he. You each had only your swags to start with.’

‘Very good, sir. But permit me to remark that when you state that the honourable gentleman put his money into the land, you make a statement that is, if I may say so, contrary to the fact.’

‘How so? He must have put his money into it when he cleared it and turned it from a forest into meadows.’

‘By your leave, sir, here we come on the twin Demons—the Ownership of Land and Banks and Financing. Young Mr. Fairlie, relative of your own, I have the honour to understand’—here Mr. Shumate inclined his head towards Frankfort—‘the then young Mr. Fairlie, just come to look after the little Brassville Branch of the Imperial Bank, you know, sir——’

‘Certainly, my uncle, and a very good uncle too.’

‘Well, sir, he, as I was about to remark, took up, as the bankers say, Mr. Lamborn and financed him. He advanced the money, and the money got the land, and the land has made Mr. Lamborn the distinguished person he is. It continued growing wealth all the time for him, even when he and his esteemed family were in Europe enjoying themselves. But who took me up? Who gave me an advance? And how could I get the land without money? I work hard, sir, but no increase in the value of boots comes to help me, and I gain nothing by the growing value of land. I have no land except my plot of garden down the street there, which I work with my own hands. It only gives me a few vegetables for the children—the wife is dead some years, sir. No, I and my two young ones are the victims of an unjust social state.’ He stopped short, apparently checking himself, and the anxious eyes turned full on Frankfort with a beseeching, pained look, as if searching everywhere for justice, but able nowhere to find it.

‘Well, I certainly should have hoped that in this young country an industrious man like yourself would have done better in all that time,’ remarked our politician, not without real sympathy for the evidently sincere feelings and ideas of the shoemaker. ‘But Mr. Lamborn,’ he continued, ‘is not a bad style of man either. He seems to take a great interest

in all your local affairs. He has this morning been speaking about trying to get Government to purchase, for the use of the Province, the Patent for the Poisoned Wheat, and Government aid——'

'Don't you help anything of the sort, sir!' exclaimed Jacob Shumate, now with indignation rather than distress marking his countenance.

'Why not? The rabbits eat up the grass and destroy everything where they don't wire-net them out.'

'You will excuse me, Professor Frankfort, if I say that you don't quite grasp the facts of the Rabbit question; possibly, if I may say so without the least disrespect, from conversing mainly with one branch of social life. Sir, the rabbits eat the grass of the rich man, but give employment to the poor man. Why, sir, there are fifty-three families in and about Glooscap alone who are supported by trapping rabbits, and I don't know how many more are employed by the wire fencing.'

'But surely, Mr. Shumate, you would not preserve the rabbits merely to bleed the landowners?'

'Why not, sir, might I venture to ask? They are the messengers of Providence to distribute wealth. And if you only will count all the value grasped by the landowners in the unearned increment, as was set out by John Stuart Mill, you will see that the rabbits make a very moderate levy, indeed, upon behalf of the community at large.'

'Still, as a thinking man, as you appear to be, Mr. Shumate, you would not say that the prosperity of the country would be increased by the destruction of any kind of wealth.'

'Pardon me, sir, but I do say it,' Jacob Shumate replied, rather discarding the half-deferential air that he at times assumed—'I do say it. Some wealth may be destroyed, but more is distributed. Of what use is it to me that my old mate, Mr. Lamborn, has now a million of money unless it serves me in some direction? No, sir, I hope that you will not be found, as our Representative, backing up the wealthy—piling it on to them.'

'I can assure you, Mr. Shumate, I have no such object. I only wish to do what is fair to the country, and to the district too, in any reasonable way.'

'Well, Mr. Frankfort, if you want to assist the district, it would be better to get some aid from Government for catching the parrots than for killing the rabbits.'

'Catching the parrots?' inquired Frankfort.

'Yes, sir; if you want to help Glooscap, you might get the Honourable the Treasurer to do something for the Red Parrot Exportation Company. I have no interest in it myself. I only speak because it will give employment about here.'

'Red Parrot Exportation Company!' exclaimed Frankfort.

'Yes; why, the Red Parrot Exportation Company, when in full operation over the Province, will give employment to thousands catching those beautiful birds,—you have seen them all about in your journey here, sir; then to hundreds of others in making their cages for sending them to Europe; and dozens more of young women teaching them to speak cleverly.'

'But what, Mr. Shumate, have the Government got to do with this Company you speak of?' asked our politician, feeling that, after all he had heard about demands for Government help, he had here come upon even a new phase of the subject.

'I would presume, sir,' said Shumate, with some solemnity, 'that it is the duty of the Government to assist all honest industry. But here, sir, is at least a public object, which is not the case with the rabbit destruction.'

'But I still cannot see where the claim on the Government for this Company comes in. Why, here is Mr. Shumate,' Frankfort continued, addressing Quiggle, who had just returned, having left the buggy at the Red Parrot Inn, where they were to lunch—'here, Mr. Shumate says that the Government ought to help the Red Parrot Company. It is the first I have heard of it.'

'Ah, that won't do now, Jacob. You're not the good man I thought after all,' remarked the agent, with a pleasant smile. 'You know the Red Parrot Company cannot get Government aid; it would not be lawful.'

'Why not, Mr. Quiggle, may I inquire?' asked the shoemaker.

'Why? Because they don't keep the eight hours law:

the parrots won't let them—they'll only be caught early in the morning or at roost time in the evening.'

'There you are wrong, Mr. Quiggle: the work can be done in shifts; only, to be sure, so far it is only a poor man's venture, and so I suppose couldn't claim your sympathy.'

'Ah, that won't wash, Jacob. Surprised at a confirmed Liberal like you tampering with the eight hours law. But come along to the Red Parrot itself after dinner, and we'll have it out with you. Bye-bye, Mr. Shumate; we must hurry along, sir; there is Snipe down the street, and he wants to see the respected Member without delay.' And shaking hands with the shoemaker, our politician and the agent hurried off to meet Snipe.

While they were on the way to meet and face this new constituent, Frankfort, who had noticed Shumate's brief reference to his wife, and that he had abruptly broken off from the subject, asked Quiggle about her. He thought that there might be some hidden trouble there, which possibly made the shoemaker still more dissatisfied with his lot in life. And so there was. It seemed that he had long remained a bachelor, and he had secretly prided himself upon being able to live his own life, independent of the company and the fascination of woman, which so many seemed to find essential to their existence. He secretly despised the weakness of these poor fellows, as he regarded them, followed their married career with his keen and not very gracious observation, and then thanked God that, as for himself, he was not as other men were. He gave his attention to local public affairs, while also partly following his own craft, and found in them, if not something to love, at least something that filled his soul. This was all very well for several years. But Holy Writ has said that it is not good for man to be alone. Nature rarely puts up with her purposes being flouted. On men of the solitary, self-centred type of Jacob, who have been independent of female blandishments in their youth, she often makes a sudden, not to say treacherous, dash as they near middle age, taking the garrison by surprise and carrying by storm the fort that was supposed to be safe from all attack.

The storming party in the case of Jacob was Daisy Dill

—so she was called, though no one knew why—the striking-looking barmaid at the Red Parrot, at Glooscap. She had come up from Miranda, and little was known of her career, but she soon made a stir in the quiet village, for she was handsome and dashing, brilliant in her dress, and withal without reproach in her manner of life.

No human being could be imagined more diametrically unlike Jacob Shumate than Daisy Dill. Yet he was drawn towards her. Man walketh in a vain show—woman. Though the most sober of men, his custom having previously been not to touch beer or wine, except at public functions, he used to spend most of the evenings that were not given to the trappers and other committees, at the Red Parrot, in such intermittent conversation with Daisy Dill as her bar duties allowed her to indulge in. Sunday walks during church time—neither of them went to church—followed, and marriage followed the walks.

But it was a failure. Neither of them was suited to the other, nor indeed was Daisy Dill to married life at all; nor yet was Jacob adapted to it, unless under widely different conditions from those he now found himself in. After the first tumult of passion was over, nothing was left but two dissimilar beings linked together—no thought, no feeling, no instinct in common. For Jacob, though a plain, rough man, was not of a low nature. This could not be said of Daisy Dill. As a mere animal she belonged to a lower type than he did. As a thinking being she was incapable of understanding, much less sympathising with, the ideas and purposes that in his small way were so dear to Jacob. She had no mental machinery for taking in or entertaining thoughts such as he was always brooding over. As the months rolled on there was no sign of the advent of that mutual society, help, and comfort that one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity, of which the marriage service speaks. On the contrary, she despised him even for his good qualities, and inwardly sneered at his solicitude about the grievances of the trappers; while he felt a smouldering indignation that to such a creature as this he should have given up freedom, career in life, mental happiness, or at least such mental happiness as he ever had. As they rose from

their pillows each morning the mutual, though secret, sigh escaped from each of them, 'Oh that I could only have wakened up to find myself free again!'

But Jacob conscientiously struggled on for a while, and poor Daisy Dill staggered on too, though she got more and more sick at heart with Jacob's dingy home, and longed for the brightness and company of her former life. In the first two years two children were born, a little girl, Flopsey, and a boy, Popsey, as they were afterwards known among the neighbours. But maternal duties were not suited to the taste of Daisy Dill. So far from contenting her, the children and the trouble they gave her—perverse little things, as she considered them—made her more dissatisfied than ever. She neglected them, and the kind Widow Dobbs, who lived in a cottage near, often had her mother's heart touched by the sad state of the bairns, owing to both the want of interest in them and the want of knowledge what to do with them of their own mother. When Jacob would be coming back late from the Trappers' Committee at Brassville, she would meet him on his way up the road, and make vigorous representations about the state of affairs at the home during his absence.

The situation was a sad one, and under the old ideas of marriage there was little help for it. The unhappy pair, pressed by the irrevocable nature of the situation, must have tried to accommodate themselves to it, and perhaps gained self-reformation and mutual improvement, being driven to duty by suffering. Or at least they would have remained as a standing warning to others not to enter on the married state unadvisedly. But the newer methods of our time provided an easy remedy. Jacob instituted a suit for divorce upon the ground of incompatibility of temper. Daisy Dill made no defence. In truth, she welcomed the suit. She was quite at one with him about it. It was one of the few things in their married life in regard to which their tempers were not incompatible. After a reasonable amount of inquiry by the Court, the decree sought for was granted, and Jacob Shumate and Daisy Dill were one no longer. He had no need to fall back upon the ancient common-law rights of the father to have the custody of his children, as the wife was only too glad to be rid of them, as well as of him.

It was a great relief to Jacob to be free again. His only difficulty was about the children—those little hostages to fortune which generally make up so much of the joy of married life, but which sometimes also add to its difficulties. He grew more and more attached to them, with a tenderness which seemed to be all the stronger because of the chilling repulse that his affections had suffered from their mother. But here the Widow Dobbs came to his help—a woman who was as obviously fitted by nature for family life as Daisy Dill was ill adapted to it—and Flopsey and Popsey, with her kindly help, got on better without their own mother than they had with her. Such was the domestic experience of Jacob Shumate.

‘Who is Snipe?’ asked Frankfort, continuing the conversation, as he and the agent walked up the main street of the village.

‘Why, Locky Snipe, the Provincial Lands Officer here. He is an important man is Locky—bit of a character too. He has his little wants, has Locky; we all have, haven’t we? Good practice for you, sir, to listen to his tale of woe, though he is a trifle long-winded. But here we are, Mr. Snipe. Let me introduce you to our new and respected Member. I will be with you again directly, sir,’ said the agent to Frankfort, as he left to go down the street to tell some of the leading electors of the Member’s arrival.

‘I just wanted to see you for one moment, Mr. Frankfort, to convey to you my best respects. The Parliamentary Representative is the link in the Constitution between the State Service and the State. A great position, sir, and you have my hearty welcome.’

‘I am obliged to you. You manage the Provincial Lands Department Branch here, do you not?’

‘Yes, sir, and have done so for the last twenty-four years. And, sir, what do you think they desire to do with me now—it was the matter I wished to have a word with you about—they want to move me away from my wife and little family here, or to send us, wife, family, and all, to where do you think, Mr. Frankfort?’

‘I really have no idea, Mr. Snipe.’

‘Why, to Budgee Budgee, right across the Divide, at the other end of the Province.’

‘You don’t wish to be moved anywhere from Glooscap, then?’

‘Certainly not, sir. My wife’s respected mother is here, my children born here, my little property around me, and all to be sacrificed; and to what, Mr. Frankfort?—to a Regulation of the Department. It’s tyranny, sir.’

‘Why, what is the Regulation?’ asked our politician.

‘Why, Glooscap, you see, sir, is rated third class, branch officer in charge, salary £250; Budgee Budgee, second class, salary £400; and because my salary is £400, I am to be banished over the mountains. They have been trying it on for years; but Mr. Meeks, I must say, was very good with the Minister. A word from you now to the Honourable Mr. Dalby would set matters right. If you can arrange this for me, sir, you needn’t trouble about the subscription. It was done unbeknown to me. I would not think of asking about it.’

‘The subscription? What subscription? What have we got to do with a subscription?’ asked our politician.

‘Oh, don’t trouble about it, Mr. Frankfort. I would not take it—I really wouldn’t take it. Didn’t Mr. Quiggle mention it to you?’

‘No; this is the first that I have heard of it.’

‘Well, you know, really it’s a small thing in one way, but gratifying to me too. The people here, you see, appreciate my services among them; so, lately, they wanted to get up a little testimonial to me in the shape of a subscription. Well, what do they do but collect £100, and down they send to the Minister for his consent, without a word to me. Of course, I wired to the Department at once, when I heard, declining. Why, it is contrary to the Regulations to receive gifts.’

‘So the people had to take back their money?’

‘Quite so, Mr. Frankfort; but I had a very handsome letter from the Minister, recognising my long services; but Regulation against gifts imperative, so I trust he will listen favourably to you in the other matter.’

‘Well, I shall inquire into it when I get to Miranda, Mr.

Snipe. To be sure, £100 is a good sum for a man to lose, even if he have £400 a year.'

'Truly, sir, and I could have got the money in a way ; for Mrs. Snipe's mother was ready to take it—in fact, rather blamed me for not agreeing to that settlement of the question. But here's Mr. Quiggle, sir, and I am wanted at the office. So I will take my leave, Mr. Frankfort, trusting to get justice from you.'

'I suppose it's the old thing with Snipe?' remarked Quiggle, as he and Frankfort walked away. 'Don't want no moving : wife, children, mother-in-law all dead agen it.'

'Yes, that's it. It does seem a little hard, when he is so liked in the place. £100 is a good sum for a village like Glooscap.'

'What? No, you don't mean it. Another subscription. That's not bad now, indeed it isn't. Ha! ha!' and Quiggle bent down laughing, and looking round at Frankfort as if to see if he really meant it.

'Yes, the people here want to present him with £100 as a token of their appreciation of his public services ; only the State Workers' Regulations, of course, forbid it.'

'Well, now, that *is* not bad,' persisted the agent, still laughing. 'The £100 again, and I suppose his self-denial in not letting the mother-in-law take it, and handsome letter from the Department, regrets, etc. etc. That is good. Snipe and mother-in-law still on the boards. It's not bad, really.'

'Why, what do you mean? Is there no subscription, then?'

'Of course there ain't, really. But old Snipe runs it this way. Every time they want to move him—mother-in-law, on the move first, goes about to some purpose among the neighbours—Snipe unconscious of it all—neighbours subscribe handsome—know it can't be taken—off goes request to Minister sanction slight token of respect to meritorious officer, anxious to assist large family, officer's health broken, long work, small salary, good and faithful servant. Each new Minister struck by confidence of the people in Snipe—regrets can't break Regulation ; but the least he can do, you know,' and Quiggle nodded to his companion—'you know,

comply with other wishes of district, and let them retain his services.'

'So, then, the people don't risk much by their subscriptions after all?' remarked Frankfort.

'Oh, they know all about it. But once, I can tell you, they did get a start. I had a good laugh at old Pease, the butcher. This was how it was,' continued the agent, enjoying his narrative, and filling up the time as they walked on to the Public School, where they were next going. 'It was the old story. Threat of removal—round goes subscription—Snipe always attentive to Pease about his cattle on Crown lands—Pease puts down his name for £5—new Minister just come in—Meeks urges permission—exceptional case. Permission wired down! I happened to be about here that day. Says I to Pease: "All right this time, Minister consents, you can pay down your five notes." You should have seen him. Dropped his chopper, and nearly dropped his thumb off too. But here we are at the school. I'll just introduce you, and then go on to look up M'Glumpy.'

'Yes, you may leave me here a while, Quiggle. I have heard so much of the master of the Glooscap school that I would like to have a good talk with him.'

'What, with Ernest Hooper? You may well say that. He is worth talking to. You and he will hit it off. Schoolmaster? Why, he's a father to the children about here—of more good to them than some of their own fathers. His example is of more use than his books, though he is a real man for books, too; I'm scholar enough myself to know that. You will take to him. They all do about here.'

The public, though at times unjust, in most cases, and in the long run, recognise and fix a man's reputation at its real value, in whatever rank he be, from the statesman of an empire to the schoolmaster of a village. Ernest Hooper, then a young man, had emigrated with his wife to Excelsior thirty years before, and not long after coming up to the Brassville district had started, on his own account, a small school for the children of the early settlers, when the village consisted of only a few cottages. In those pioneer days, as you would look around on the lonely forests about the Glooscap Creek, with a settler's hut dotted here and there

about, you would have wondered where the children to fill a school were to come from. Yet each morning you could see them trooping along from all sides, as if they had risen out of the bushes, older ones leading the younger towards the rough weatherboard cottage by the creek, where Ernest Hooper had both school and home. He was a man that could not be classed with those who are adapted for success in practical life, if that success is taken to mean only self-aggrandisement. All his practical working energies he devoted to not merely teaching, but to training aright the rough little youngsters 'of his flock,' as he termed them. His only other pursuit and his recreation in life was found in literature; and out of his scanty means he managed to collect a small library, and to replenish it from time to time with some of the best of the new books that Henry Woodall's shop in Brassville supplied. The parson, who rode out from that town every Sunday afternoon to hold service at Glooscap, was his chief literary companion, though his wife also took some interest in books; and since children of their own were denied to them, the two were only the more wrapped up in one another, and lived happily an absolutely united life. Thus the home and school together were like an ark of culture, resting in lonely isolation amidst rugged surroundings, and sending forth in the persons of the children little messengers of a better time coming.

Some years later, when the Education Department was extending its operations into the outlying districts, it was wisely thought that it should avail itself of the successful school centre that Ernest Hooper had established on the Glooscap Creek, and he was admitted on the score of merit, *ad eundem* as they say at the Universities, to the rank of a first-class teacher in the service, and his school was likewise included in the Government list. He only insisted upon one condition in accepting the transfer. He had never attached much weight to the mere teaching of Catechism and Bible lessons as a part of the school day's work. But it had been his practice from the first to open his school with the Lord's Prayer and the singing of one of those simple but noble hymns which strike notes that find a responsive echo in so many human hearts the wide world over. He closed

the school in the same way. He made it a condition of letting his school come under the State that this practice should not be interfered with. It would be sacrilege, he said, as far as he was concerned, having accustomed his children to this simple recognition that there was a Superior Power above them, and that they themselves were something more than the cats and dogs running about their homes, to cast it aside now for any secular advantages. If they would not agree to this, he would let them start their own school, and he would continue his with such of the children as would follow him. As, in fact, no rival school to his could have been successfully started, the Department wisely resolved that, though the law prescribed Free, Secular, and Compulsory Education, they would wink at this license on the part of Ernest Hooper; and so this State school continued, with the cordial approval of all men, and especially of all women, to be opened and closed with this simple religious exercise. Hooper himself maintained that this reverent recognition of the Deity in no way impaired the secular principle of the Act. The education is to be secular, he would say, but mere secular education is assisted by being attended by the general sanction of religion; and this is quite distinct from the teaching of special creeds—a very important duty too, but one belonging to the Churches. Just lately the Government had built a handsome brick school in the main street of the village, and it was to this that our travellers were directing their way.

‘Oh yes, you will like Ernest Hooper,’ Quiggle kept repeating. ‘He is a bit grave and sedate for us up here. Fact is, I do assure you, that man has never been gay since his wife died. He always wears black, though it’s ten years since. Odd, ain’t it?’

The agent, when going down to the inn with the buggy, had told Ernest Hooper of their coming to see him, and as they came to the door of the school, a staid-looking man, of scholarly aspect, advanced to meet them. His kindly bearing qualified the sternness of his solemn gray eyes, while his sedate and retired manner indicated the contemplative man rather than the practical one who is clever in the ways of this struggling, pushing world.

‘Mr. Hooper, let me introduce our new Member, and I think I had better leave you two learned gentlemen to yourselves.’ Quiggle respected Hooper too much to ever venture to address him by his Christian name. ‘And, sir, if you please, we will have lunch at the Red Parrot when you can come down’; and off the bustling agent hurried to see M’Glumpy, as he had arranged.

The scene now before our politician was one of which Democracy may be proud. Compared with the old style of common school—and it only designed for a few—with its master often himself ignorant, perhaps a failure from other callings in life, and sometimes even bankrupt in character; with its dilapidated furniture and mean surroundings, ignorant methods of teaching and discipline; school fees, small in themselves, but considerable to the poor—compared with all this, the cheerful, spacious rooms that he now went through, well built, well lighted, well ventilated, fitted up with what was required for the most efficient school teaching, maps on the walls, and admirable series of school-books, some simple models to help teaching and learning, Kindergarten appliances for the little ones—and the whole open to all, free to all, welcoming all, and blessed also by the intelligent and moral tone that Ernest Hooper imparted both to the children and to the teachers under him—all this reveals not merely an improvement in methods of teaching, but a revolution in the ideas with which the poor are regarded. It was not alone that all those well-fed, comfortably, if roughly, clad children were taught to read and write. It was the recognition of the grand principle that all were entitled to a chance in life, that none were to be outcast, never in the race, but pushed out of the running from the first, and that the Social State, while not attempting to enforce an impossible equality among men, yet endeavours, by its equal justice to the young of all classes, to give free scope to the natural powers of each one in the race of life.

‘How do you do, Mr. Frankfort? I am glad to welcome you to our school. I may say that I will take the more interest in your career as, like myself, you are a teacher, only in a more exalted sphere.’

‘Yes, we are both teachers,’ replied Frankfort; ‘and

teaching the young, if one does it with heart and sincerity, is a great work in school or university.'

'Truly indeed,' said the schoolmaster, 'I would rather teach the children in a forest school than preach to men in a city cathedral. You can perhaps instruct the one, but the others you can mould and fashion altogether.'

'Still, I feel some wonder,' pursued Frankfort, after a little pause, 'when I see a man of your attainments, as I understand, giving your life up so contentedly to this little group of country children.'

'Ah, there you see it is. They are country children now, but after a while they are scattered over the Province, perhaps over the world. And there is so much involved in even one life. The influence I impart ripples out, I hope, in widening circles, though it is a lonely, distant spot where the stone is dropped. Yes, I may say it without disrespect, it is a greater work than politics. It is a noble work truly to govern men justly, but it's nobler to teach them to govern themselves.'

'Quite true, it is just what I would say myself. And I hear, moreover, that you have solved the religious difficulty in your school.'

'In a way, I certainly have,' answered Ernest Hooper, 'and, to speak my mind, in what seems to me the best way. You see that what we describe as the religious difficulty is a logical, argumentative difficulty, not a practical one; at least, not a practical one with the plain men and women who are the parents of the children. As far as they are concerned, there is no difficulty in saying each morning a devout prayer or two, that all Christians, indeed all sane men, could join in, and singing an inspiring hymn.'

'Then you don't propose to teach the facts of religion to the children at all?'

'Of course we could not do that in the State School, which is for the children of all creeds. Besides that, while I am a believing man myself, I hold that religious lessons in the daily school, and given by the State teacher, would be of little value. I don't know how you look at it, but I think that this teaching of the facts of religion to the young is, and especially is in our time, a very critical and difficult

matter. I often think that as much unbelief springs from unwise teaching as from no teaching. It wants both faith and intelligence in the teacher; and sometimes I fear,' continued Hooper, looking earnestly at his companion, 'that one or other is lacking in those who undertake to teach the Bible to the young. The danger is obvious. When children grow up and find that some things taught them by rote as facts are not really facts, they are very apt to think that all they have learned is much the same, and that religion, generally, is a make-believe. It is,' added Ernest Hooper in a solemn tone, 'a very serious and a very difficult problem too.'

'Why, do you know,' said Frankfort, 'what you say reminds me of what happened at The Blocks a week or so ago when I was there. It was a Sunday, and Miss Lamborn came in from the Sunday School, and mentioned that she had been quite put out by a question asked by one of the boys. She was reading the story of the Barren Fig Tree, in St. Matthew, when one sharp little fellow asked quite respectfully, and only in order to be informed, "Please, miss, is that the same fig tree that we learnt about last Sunday in St. Mark, that it wasn't the season for figs." She was rather upset by this simple question, and did not know what to say. And she is a highly intelligent girl, I must say, and she seems to have religious feelings too. The good lady, the mother—Mrs. Lamborn, you know—was quite indignant at the boy presuming to ask such a question. "Why did you not tell him to hold his tongue?" she said. And, by the way, I was rather amused at the daughter's answer—"Now, mother dear, what would be the use of my telling him to hold his tongue, if I could not make him hold his mind too?"'

'Just so. That is a fair example of the difficulty of teaching the Bible nowadays to our youngsters. But I hold,' continued Ernest Hooper, 'that it is a great evil, and a needless one too, to have school from week's end to week's end with all mention of God blotted out.'

'Might I ask how you managed to get the Department to——'

'What, tolerate my religion, such as it is? Why, I would

not have come in without it, though they put a big free school next to me. It was in that way or no way.'

'You felt so strongly about it then, I presume?'

'Well, to tell you the truth, this was it. The wife had died only a little before. She used to come in and start the hymn.' Turning to Frankfort, he continued, 'You don't know what it is to lose a wife after nearly twenty years together. They tell me you are not married. But when one-half of you has been wrenched off, and at middle age too, the fear of other of the world's losses and misfortunes don't impress one much. The demands of duty, to do all you can in what time may be yours, seem stronger than ever. It's the only thing left standing in the wreck. So I was fixed, and indifferent as to the result to myself, and the Department very fairly, and I think wisely, thought it better to take me, religion and all,' he added with a slight smile. 'All the parents like it, religious and irreligious.'

As they walked through the school Frankfort noticed many young people who were clearly over the school age of attendance, and a senior class of grown boys and girls pursuing their studies in a small room by themselves.

'What are these young people working for? Do you keep them here as long as they desire to study?' he asked.

'The elder ones are studying for the Matriculation Examination at your University, or to qualify for the State Service, the girls chiefly to be teachers.'

'Do many of them go to take up their parents' work or go to industrial callings?'

'A few do,' replied the schoolmaster. 'The truth is, that everything has its weak side, and that is the weak side, so far, of universal high-class education. I am disappointed that it is so. But that's no reason for denying it. They don't sufficiently realise the dignity, the great dignity of honest labour. Old Dr. Johnson's dictum, that when education was universal people would not be above plain work, as all would be the same, has not as yet been verified. We want to learn that we ought to take intelligence into manual occupations, not send it to starve, and at times indeed degrade itself, in what are considered genteel employments. Naturally enough, too, the poorer the rank of the

parents, the more their ambition is gratified by seeing their children raised, as they ignorantly think, to a higher lot in life. They would rather see them pinched and miserable with a quill pen than independent and comfortable following the plough—and that though, mind you, the proper use of the plough often calls for more real intelligence than the common use of the pen.'

'Well, to be sure, that's a phase that universal education must pass through in young, small communities with easy conditions of life; and it can only be a phase, for men must live, and they can't do so by reading and writing only,' remarked our politician.

'Certainly that is true. Even now one can see the symptoms of a coming reaction, and in a curious way, too, moving from above. Many of the boys who now go upon the land belong to the better-off classes. The professions are left to the ambition of the poor.'

'Yes, yes, the tendency must correct itself,' continued our politician. 'The education of *all* is a new idea, and like most new ideas it is apt to throw out some false developments before we settle down to the true lines. But experience teaches. Great truth in this old copy-book heading,' he said, as he took one of the books from a sturdy urchin of about thirteen, who had produced a series of frightfully distorted imitations of the beautiful copperplate at the top of the page, which announced that great truth that all assent to intellectually, but which it requires the stern lessons of life to bring home to us personally.

'True, and after all it's only a spot on the sun. But we must make learning practical. When an educated people do take to practical work they do it better than ever. Look at Prussia. What would Bismarck, or, for the matter of that, Von Moltke, have done without it?'

'All these youngsters,' said Frankfort, looking over the silent—except for question and answer—busy, attentive classes, 'appear to be well conducted, and should, I suppose, be easy to manage.'

'Certainly they are,' replied Ernest Hooper. 'No hoodlums here. To be sure, they don't understand the idea of reverence as we have it in old countries.'

‘No reverence?’

‘Not in the old sense. How could they? What have we to teach reverence? We have scarcely yet among us any very old people; little of the domestic hierarchy of grandparents and elder relations, from which reverence in the family and the tribe grows up to things of the nation. We have no ancient buildings, under the shadow of which generations come and go. Our very trees are young; our fossils show recent formations. But I find the youngsters teachable, if they have some one to look up to whom they can respect for himself. A certain good feeling and sense of what is reasonable takes the place of the old formal habit of reverence.’

‘I suppose the habit of independence is apt to be accompanied, even with young people, by an intelligence that tends to correct its excesses?’ said Frankfort. ‘That boy whose copy-book I took just now did not bob or pull his forelock or even stand up, but he seems to be a bright, well-conducted lad.’

‘He is one of my good boys,’ answered the schoolmaster—‘none better; and he has the reverential feeling in his nature too, though, as I say, there is little scope for its exercise with us. What else have we to trust to in our time for men or children but intelligence supporting the old principle of obedience? For certainly the rule of direct authority we see to be weakening on all sides—magistrate and subject, husband and wife, master and servant, parent and child.’

‘Yes, and there comes in the cheering confidence that its place will be supplied by the higher principle of duty or love in subject, wife, workman, child,’ rejoined our politician. ‘Intelligence takes the place and does the work of repression.’

‘True. That constitutes, however, the problem of our age, Mr. Frankfort. You are quite right to regard it with cheerful confidence, as you say. Still, experience, not argument, must prove how far all this is to go, and what are its limitations; for in no organisation, great or small, can you wholly get rid of the principle of authority.’

As they walked through the main schoolroom they

came to a small apartment at the end, which served as an office for the master and a place where he taught at times a special class.

'This is your book of school returns, I suppose?' said Frankfort, as he pointed to a long account-book-looking tome on the master's desk.

'No, indeed,' answered Hooper, 'that's a record that would have startled Busby or Keats, or any of the other old masters of flogging memory. It is the Corporal Punishment Record. The Regulations require that if a boy gets more than one stroke with the cane, the date, name, class, and age of the pupil must be entered here. When the inspector comes round he is to examine it and initial.'

'Well, to be sure, a proposal to old Keats to keep such a volume would have staggered him; or cruel Busby, who used to give even small boys severe floggings for mere trifles. These men would have wanted a library of Record Books. It would have surprised the earls and baronets whose sons they flogged too,' remarked Frankfort.

'Why, it's one other instance, out of many, of how the new principle of human government is to work. We legislate for the feelings of the schoolboy. The idea now is to incite men and boys to good, rather than to punish them for wrong-doing. Attention to the bad side of nature is fading out, and all is expectation from the free scope of the good. It's a noble principle too,' said Ernest Hooper, 'so long as we do not expect so much from this human nature that we forget its faulty vein altogether. For myself, I expect that experience will teach in this, as in so many other matters, that the real truth of the subject does not lie with either extreme.'

'I remember hearing of this regulation; but I never happened to see one of the books before. I notice that several of the earlier pages are torn out.'

'Yes, I asked leave of the Department to take them out. Results that are never thought of sometimes follow regulations, and laws too, we may say. You see, such a book as this in a small quiet school does for a generation. It so happened that one of the boys here, some years ago, committed a rather bad boyish offence. I caned him

soundly, and duly entered all the particulars. He turned out in time an excellent boy, married when he grew up, and, unlike many others, settled on a farm in the district. Afterwards he became President of the School Board—what Mr. Blow is now—and, by the way, Mr. Blow wants to see you about fencing the school, I think. He and I forgot all about the entry, till one day, as he was showing some visitors over the school, he turned over the book as a curious record, and came right upon the entry of his own offence and punishment. Since then I have got permission to cut out the pages after a year or so.'

'The Regulations exempt girls from all corporal punishment,' remarked Frankfort.

'Yes, that's another symptom of the humane tendencies of our age.'

'Yes, and soon too,' continued our politician, 'we may expect this enlightened feeling to extend to politics, and give women everywhere equal voice there with men.'

'Well, that's for you political gentlemen to decide,' remarked the schoolmaster. 'Meanwhile, our school training does not point exactly that way. I teach all my boys to show to the girls that deference and consideration that is due to a weaker, but not to an equal, sex. If there is any dusting to be done on a dusty day about the girls' forms, I set a boy to do it. If there is anything to be fetched for them on a wet day, I send out a boy. When I dismiss the school, the boys have to wait till the girls get their hats and go out first. In everything I seek to impress upon the boys that when they grow up to be men they are to be the protectors and champions of the women.'

'Good training that. It will teach them, as men, to value women all the more when they gain equal political rights,' responded our politician.

'I am glad to hear it,' said the schoolmaster.

'What a handsome building you have, Mr. Hooper!' exclaimed Frankfort, as they walked round outside.

'Yes, really it is. And a little style in school buildings is not thrown away. It gives a certain dignity to the whole institution of popular instruction. It cost a good sum too, I assure you. You see, the ground around is unfenced still.

They want to see you about that. As the Government are so pinched for funds now, the Minister asked the districts that had got new schools to do the fencing themselves. We have the timber here, to be sure. But here comes the President of our Board himself, Mr. David Blow. Mr. Blow, sir, let me introduce to you our new Member, Mr. Frankfort. I have to go back to my duties, gentlemen, so I will take my leave, if you please.'

'I makes my respects to you on getting on top of Meeks, though he warn't quite a bad job lot neither, and I'm glad ye're come along this way. I looked in, as I'm on my way to see a mob of Crank's bullocks that I'm looking up, to see about this 'ere fencing. Just look at that,' said Mr. Blow, facing round to have a full view of the school—'look at that there fine buildin', all open and exposed there, like a ship at sea in a storm, no sails, nor fence, nor nothin' about it.' Notwithstanding his confusion of metaphors, the President made clear his idea as he stretched out both hands to the exposed edifice.

'Yes, it certainly does want fencing,' said our politician.

'And why don't they take on to it then?' exclaimed Mr. Blow.

'I suppose you have asked for it?'

'Yes, a dozen times, and I've told old Hooper there to write too. And what do you think they say? What are they leading on to? Why, no more money. £1500 gone in building. Hadn't we better do the fencing ourselves, if you don't object at all, if you please.'

'Fence yourselves! well really——' began our politician.

'Yes, it's the Gospel truth I'm saying—I can show you the Secretary chap's letter. Minister suggests parents turn out some Saturday afternoon, fence with odd lots timber. Saw-mills. My word!'

'The Government are very hard up now, you know, Mr. Blow. It would certainly give them a lift if the districts that have got these new schools did look after the fencing.'

'Oh, come now, Mr. Frankfort, that ain't my idea of Free, Sec'lar, and Compuls'y at all. Government takes on them to make it free, and then ask us to pay. That ain't the

correct card at all. And we look to you, sir, as our Member, to protect us from being put on to like that. We do indeed. How many of them all about have done the fencin' themselves? Why should we be wictimised, sir—wictimised, I'd like to know?' And the President extended his arms in expostulation.

'Ah, who's wictimising my friend Mr. Blow,' interposed Quiggle, who had come up from the Red Parrot for Frankfort, as his prolonged conversation with Hooper was delaying lunch. 'Who is wictimising my old friend Mr. Blow? Not an easy thing for any one to do,' continued the agent, in his blandest tones. He saw that something had gone wrong.

'Why, here's Mr. Frankfort a-takin' on that we might do the school fencin' ourselves—Glooscap martyrs like. We couldn't swallow that, no ways. Short commons like that.'

'Ah, dear me, you don't say that? Well, well, let us come and swallow the lunch at the Parrot, and we can fence about the fencing afterwards, can't we?' said Quiggle, looking cheerfully at the President, and smiling at the attempt at a joke.

'No thank'ee. I've to be after these bullocks of Crank's I'm rather sweet on. I'll be down to the Deputation all right. But don't lamb us down about the fencing, anyway. No short commons on that score, no ways'; and away after his bullocks the President hurried.

'David is riled a bit. I can see that—David is riled,' remarked Quiggle, with a serious air, as he and our politician walked on to the Red Parrot. 'David is riled,' he repeated sentimentously.

'Well, really, I would be sorry to rile any of my constituents; but it does seem to me reasonable that, after the State has spent all that money on the school building, the parents should give an afternoon to run up a fence round for the playground of their own children.'

'But, my dear sir, isn't it the system for the Government to do everything? When in Rome do—you know the rest. Fact is, David would not even so much mind the afternoon's work; but he feels a bit done at being asked to

fence when the other places don't. That's what sticks in David. "Mops and brooms, sir," says David—"mops and brooms."

'Whom have we to see after lunch, Mr. Quiggle? It's hard work this interviewing all day,' said our politician, willing to turn away from the fencing question.

'Ah, you may say that, sir. Though I am pretty well seasoned, I call it the hardest work that the two-footed human animal can be set to,' replied the little agent. 'Whom have we to see?' he continued. 'Why, the Deputation first, after lunch, and then M'Glumpy wants a word with you. He says only one word; but there's often a good deal in his one word, and behind his one word, too. Then I should not wonder if Jacob Shumate would come sailing round for something or other. But step in, sir—step in; here we are, and not dead beat yet—not dead beat by no ways.' And the agent led on upstairs to the private parlour of the Red Parrot, where he and the Member were to lunch.

During the meal Frankfort inquired the particulars about the Deputation that Quiggle had referred to. Would it keep them long? He was anxious to get away and return to Brassville in time to meet Dillon, who was coming up by the evening train, at dinner at the Lake Reservoir. The agent assured him that the afternoon's work would be short. As to the Deputation, Birnie Farrar, the Town Clerk, had told him that it was a very simple matter that the Mayor and Councillors of Glooscap wanted to see their Member about. The Mayor's half-yearly reception would follow, but that need not take long; only the usual toasts would be proposed. They could perhaps slip away before the whole list had been exhausted.

'Oh, it won't take long,' the agent continued; 'and if old Shumate turns up with some fresh grievance, why, you must just choke him off. It's easy to back out some way. Easy as falling off a log.'

'Then there's some one else to see me, is there not?' inquired Frankfort.

'Why, only M'Glumpy—yes, he must have his one word; perhaps not much in it, this time—something for his son or nephew, or both. Promise him. Easy done. Rimy

is not half a bad sort ; Rimigius M'Glumpy isn't half bad, I say.'

'A leading local man, I presume?'

'Why, yes,' answered Quiggle. 'And he and the clan voted straight on the polling day. They said so, and they did so. Not like Barney Clegg there, at the Brown Jug, the sinner. The day after the election says Barney to me: "I give you my Sunday good wishes, Mr. Quiggle, for your success in putting in your man ; I voted straight anyway." "Yes, Mr. Clegg," says I, "you did vote straight—for Meeks." You should have seen Barney when he knew that I had found him out—you should indeed. But M'Glumpy is straight, and we must go straight for him, we really must.'

Here the landlord looked in to say that the Mayor and Council had arrived, and were waiting for the Member in the long Commercial Room. When they went down they found the room crowded with the citizens of Glooscap, with His Worship the Mayor and the Borough Council, and especially the Town Clerk, at their head. All seemed to be sensible of the dignity of their respective offices, from His Worship downwards. All appeared to be worthy and sturdy burgesses, independent sons of the soil, such as in older land and earlier times had stood forth to claim the rights or defend the liberties of their borough. And they, too, were vigilant guardians of the claims of their town ; but their demands were of a different kind from those that the corporations of towns used in the old days to present to their sovereign. It was no question of asserting their rights and liberties, or claiming exemption from some undue demand of aid and supply to the throne that had brought them together. It was, in fact, the other way. It was to ask an aid and supply from His Majesty, which the King's Government made the same difficulty about granting that their ancestors used to raise about their aids and supplies, but which they hoped to be able to secure by their own persistence and the political influence of their Representative. The aid and supply was to enable them to drain a large swamp in the district which properly they should drain themselves.

The Mayor was not an orator, so he only spoke a few

plain words. They wanted the money from the Government. The Representative for the district had only to put it in the right way to the Minister to get it. He concluded his brief remarks by saying that they had all such confidence in their Member that they were sure he would leave 'no stone unturned to secure them their rights.'

Our politician, who was still somewhat new to the business, could not help asking how he was to present this claim on the Government for what was the work of the Corporation and to be paid for by its rates, when Mr. Birnie Farrar, the Town Clerk, whose custom it was to take up the running upon all questions of importance and difficulty, interposed, with a deferential bow to His Worship.

'If I might be allowed to add just one word to the full and clear statement of His Worship. True it is, as our honourable Member would appear to indicate, that this work primarily belongs to the district. But what are the facts? The swamp to be drained adjoins the main road, over which the traffic from the whole Province comes. The road cannot be properly made till the swamp is drained. The Government have always, in special cases, given assistance to main roads. Is the whole cost of making and maintaining this highway for the Province—is it, I respectfully ask, all to fall on this comparatively poor district? Surely, sir, we only ask justice from the Government, and from our Member.'

But here all attention was diverted from the road question by a lively stir in the crowd at the lower end of the room, and the vigorous efforts of some one to push himself to the front. Soon the spare figure and grievance-laden countenance of Jacob Shumate appeared, struggling through the closely-packed throng, and right on even into the civic circle itself. Having at last made good his footing, he bowed to the Mayor, and especially to the Town Clerk, half-deferentially and half-sarcastically.

'I heard just now, Mr. Mayor and gentlemen'—he spoke with marked deliberation, and his keen eyes glanced restlessly round from our politician to the Deputation—'a demand for justice. I am here as a burges of the town of Glooscap to demand justice too.'

'Quite right, Mr. Shumate,' interposed the Town Clerk ;

‘if there is any point we have missed like in putting the case in our demand for justice for this Council——’

‘Excuse me, Mr. Town Clerk, the justice I demand is not on behalf of the Council. It is against the Council: on behalf of the plundered citizens of Glooscap.’

‘Why, what are you on to now, Mr. Shumate? What’s gone wrong this time? What are you, or any of the citizens, ill-convenienced about this town? Ain’t we doing all we know, straight running for the borough?’ Thus the Mayor spoke, at unusual length for him, stirred as he was in his civic soul by the impeachment of the shoemaker.

‘Only this, Mr. Mayor, if you will be pleased to permit me’—and Shumate bowed his half-deferential bow, as before—‘only this, Mr. Mayor: I desire to bring before our worthy Representative here the proposed malversation of the funds of this borough by this Corporation.’

He spoke with great deliberation, and the ‘worthy,’ as applied to the Representative, was so prolonged in pronunciation that a critical observer might have taken the word to convey the contrary of its ordinary meaning. At his words the burgesses assembled were roused up at once by varying emotions, and testified to their excitement by exclamations of a conflicting description; some evidently regarding the speaker as Glooscapian Joe Hume, or even John Wilkes, defying the authorities, while others frowned upon him, as openly flouting all civic dignity, not to say social respectability. A residuum, and not an inconsiderable residuum, cared nothing about either the civic economy or the civic dignity just then, and only shook themselves up to enjoy the fun.

‘Oh, come, come, Citizen Shumate,’ promptly interposed the Town Clerk, who felt that this was a matter that called imperatively for his personal handling—‘come, come, Citizen Shumate, this won’t do, you know. Words like these ain’t to be used with impunity in the presence of His Worship, and of Parliamentary authority, and the burgesses assembled. I am answerable for the accounts, and I call upon you here, in the presence of this great representative gathering, to make good your words, or to take the consequences of legal, obnoxious defamation’; and Mr. Birnie

Farrar looked round confidently to his supporters. He was a popular man in his own line, and not a few citizens were personally indebted to him in regard to rates and other matters. So his men supported him with their vigorous plaudits, while the followers of the shoemaker kept encouraging him by exhortations 'To wire in,' 'To go straight from the shoulder,' 'To knock the wind out of them, and not to mind the dander,' 'To face the music, and keep up the ball,' and other inspiring and appropriate exclamations.

Jacob was in his glory. It was one of the few moments in his soured life in which he really enjoyed himself. The reproaches and demonstrations of feeling levelled against him he relished quite as much as the approbation of his own party. He had persuaded himself that he had a grievance. Power and smug respectability were combined to deny the right. The greater the anger and excitement against him, the more important he felt himself, and this exaltation, temporary though it was, was some relief from the dull routine of making shoes, and not making them very well or selling them very successfully. So there was some vigour and style in his manner as, glancing round at Birnie Farrar, he responded to that gentleman's appeal.

'With all respect to you, Mr. Town Clerk, may I be allowed to say that I am not at present alluding to your accounts. I am talking of the malversation of the burgesses' money by the Corporation of Glooscap voting £1 a week pension to the retiring Town Surveyor, Sandy M'Givern.'

Hereupon a great tumult arose in the crowd, and that many-headed and many-tongued fraternity, the People, was agitated by conflicting emotions. The prevailing feeling was, undoubtedly, one of sympathy with the object of the shoemaker to discredit the pension, and, if possible, have it disallowed. Yet the objector was not a very popular man. He was known as an unsuccessful man among his neighbours, and as an unsocial one too, who was always going upon ideas and methods of his own which were out of touch with those of the common man. The dislike to see any other person get a pension was thus the mainstay of his backing by the public. And, on the other hand, all the more substantial people, the 'respectable' part of the

community, had no feeling against the aged M'Givern getting his £1 a week, and gave their moral weight in support of the Council.

When the first effervescence of the excitement had subsided, and the crowd of citizens no longer swayed to and fro like the standing corn on the farms that surround Glooscap when blown upon by varying breezes, Birnie Farrar stood forth before the whole assemblage to vindicate the Council and to rebuke the man who did not hesitate to bring injurious charges against the authorities.

'I am positively astonished, Mr. Mayor and our Honourable Member!' he exclaimed, 'that one solitary burgess of Glooscap could be found to raise an objection to the allowance to that venerable servant of this borough, Mr. Sandy M'Givern, who has done the work of the citizens for the past thirty years. Who laid out the wide streets of this town? Who marked off the recreation ground? Who designed the bridge? Who would have dammed the Creek if Government red tape had not stopped him? And now, at threescore and ten, is he not to be looked after as well as one of the cows upon his own common. I own, Mr. Mayor,' he wound up, 'that did I not know Jacob Shumate of old, that his bark is worse than his bite, I should blush for any citizen of Glooscap going to raise such a point against a man who was working for this town before it was here at all, surveying right up the Glooscap Creek.'

'Excuse me, gentlemen,' calmly responded the shoemaker, his eyes twinkling this time with satisfaction; 'if the worthy Town Clerk, instead of doing the blushing for me, would condescend to explain what are the services that Mr. M'Givern rendered to this town before it was here, for which we are now to donate him money out of our hard-earned wages, I will be more indebted to him than I am to Mr. Sandy M'Givern. Why, may I inquire of Mr. Town Clerk, could not his late colleague, the Surveyor, save a little out of his handsome salary for his threescore and ten, like the rest of us? I only hope that Mr. Town Clerk will do so himself; else we all shall have in due time to pension him too.'

Here the plebs of Glooscap began to applaud vigorously,

and to encourage Shumate by a number of cries and exhortations which all had reference to the various incidents in a pugilistic encounter. When quiet was a little restored, the Mayor, who was rather disconcerted by the warmth of the reception given to Shumate's remarks, and hoped, by a display of mayoral deference to him, to conciliate the popular tribune, turned to Shumate, and extending his hands in a deprecating manner, remarked: 'Arter all, Mr. Shumate, a note a week ain't much.'

'His Worship the Mayor, from his position of affluence, may not regard one pound sterling a week, to which I understand he refers, as much; but I would respectfully like to ask His Worship how many of the bog holes in the main road to Brassville from this borough would one pound a week fill up? The farmers for miles around,' exclaimed the shoemaker, directing his sharp glance right down the room—'the farmers daily have their drays bogged in the ruts along the road going to market, in order that Mr. Sandy M'Givern, having drawn a good salary for the past thirty years, may now draw a good pension for the next twenty years!'

Here the applause became louder than ever, as several farmers present recalled their own unpleasant experiences in getting bogged on that particular road. Two of them had, in fact, suffered that very mishap that morning in coming in, and they were all impressed by finding their own personal troubles thus connected with the largess to Sandy M'Givern. Shumate had, without having read any books of rhetoric, quite naturally hit upon a very effective *argumentum ad hominem*. Turning round upon our politician, he remarked, in the quiet, deprecating tone that he loved to especially assume, amid all the excitement, 'I only desire to ask protection for the burgesses from the honourable gentleman who represents us in Parliament.' He laid considerable stress on the 'honourable.'

Our politician was not a little perplexed by the question thus presented to his notice. The facts were new to him, and though Quiggle had early in the episode whispered to him to 'keep her free—keep her free,' this advice laboured under the defect that so often mars the value of advice, namely, the difficulty of its practical application. How was

he to keep her free and easy before the wind in this local squall which had blown up so suddenly? His chief difficulty was to think how he, as their Representative in Parliament, was concerned in this municipal dispute. Mr. Shumate had for days before thumbed over and over the soiled pages of a tattered copy of the Provincial Municipal Institutions Act, and with a keen, though small, ingenuity framed for himself an interpretation of certain sections that he considered supported his view of the question. He was quite pleased, therefore, when Frankfort inquired—

‘But, Mr. Shumate, how can I control the Borough Council, in any view we may take of the matter?’

Producing his worn, soiled copy of the Act, which opened naturally at the page that had so often lately been turned to, the shoemaker held it up to our politician, pointing to Sections 133 to 136 with his long, lean finger, and reading the marginal note of the first section.

‘I think I can relieve the difficulty felt by our Honourable Member, by simply referring him to those portions of the Act which give power to the Minister, in certain cases of misappropriation of the borough funds, to interpose. This case,’ he added in a sort of resigned tone, looking round upon his supporters—‘this case is a clear one.’

The paternal control of the Government was the remedy that first and naturally presented itself to the mind of Burgess Shumate.

‘There, sir,’ he continued, indignantly pointing to the crumpled clauses—‘there, sir; we, the citizens, only ask you, our Representative, to interview the Honourable the Minister, and call upon him to save the municipality of Glooscap from organised and premeditated plunder. Sir, we are sheep at sea, without a shepherd, clutching at the fur robes of His Worship to save ourselves, or even at the coat tails of the Town Clerk’—here he scornfully eyed the rusty suit of Birnie Farrar—‘and clutching, I regret to say, in vain.’

Loud cheers, as the shoemaker afterwards remarked, ‘calling aloud from the public conscience,’ greeted this vigorous sentiment and mixed metaphor; while the aristocracy present made what counter-demonstrations they could. Our politician concluded that the safest way to proceed would be

to get Mr. Shumate to reduce his views to writing ; and he was confirmed in this by Quiggle, who, passing close behind him, as if going to the other side of the room, whispered, as he went by, 'Keep her free. Let Jacob scribble it.' So he requested Mr. Shumate to put, in the form of a letter to the Minister, his view of the Act, as it applied to M'Givern's case, promising to consider it himself, and, if he saw reasonable cause, to submit it to the Minister. The idea of drawing up a State paper that the Cabinet Minister was to study and ponder over quite satisfied Mr. Shumate for the present, and indeed gave him interesting occupation every evening for the next week.

Seeing a lull brought about in the conflict, the Town Clerk dexterously announced that, as the business was now concluded, His Worship would meet the civic guests in the dining-room for the usual half-yearly reception. Thither, then, the citizens repaired, including Shumate himself, whom both the Town Clerk and Quiggle allured on to the festivities, more, it must be confessed, from prudential reasons than from feelings of regard for the shoemaker. A troublesome, dangerous sort of man is always sure of having a great deal of attention paid to him. Even the Mayor and the surrounding magnates unbent and welcomed Shumate with fair words, addressing him by his Christian name in a free-and-easy, hail-fellow-well-met sort of way, while he went about, with a somewhat mollified aspect, quite enjoying his importance. As a quiet, honest shoemaker, people would scarcely have noticed him. They were deferential to him as Shumate, the agitator. He was well aware of this, and was more pleased to be feared than he would have been to be loved.

It is surprising how many sorts of toasts and sentiments can be improvised at festive gatherings as an excuse for the glass. But the feature of the long and varied list upon this occasion was that Jacob Shumate himself was got to propose one of them. It was even thus. When it was seen that the accusing burgess was gradually softening under the influence of the generous wine that makes glad the heart of man, Quiggle suggested to the Town Clerk, who prompted the Mayor, to call upon Shumate for a toast. He was a little

disconcerted, but his bitter feelings had been somewhat mollified by the influences of the genial hour, and, besides that, he could not resist the pleasure of making another speech. Still, he was keen enough to know that he must not barter away for any mess of pottage his grievance against the Mayor and Corporation of Glooscap; so he gave in an emphatic speech, 'Kindred Institutions'; and, amid all his wine-warmed fervour, he avoided saying a word in depreciation or withdrawal of his recent accusation of the borough authorities. To be sure, the next day, when the fervour of the feast was over, he had some prickings of conscience—and Jacob Shumate had a conscience—as to whether it was quite consistent of him, politically, to join in the festivities of a Corporation that he had just been accusing of malversation. But he quieted these by the reflection that it was the duty of every citizen to take part in all civic demonstrations, and particularly by remembering that he had been careful to choose such a non-committal subject for his toast. He then applied himself with renewed vigour to preparing his indictment of the Borough Council, for the consideration of the Minister. If any reader should still feel doubts about the validity of the shoemaker's vindication from the charge of inconsistency, he may at least be assured of this, that it is quite as good an explanation as many greater men than Jacob Shumate are able to give of certain passages in their political careers.

The inventive powers of this Glooscapian gathering in the devising of toasts were now getting exhausted, and our politician was anxiously looking for a good opportunity for leaving, so that he could return to Brassville in time to dine with Myles Dillon, when from the end of the room were heard the rich Milesian tones of Rimigius M'Glumpy, demanding leave from His Worship to propose one more sentiment.

'Certainly, Mr. M'Glumpy,' the Town Clerk called out, taking on himself to speak on behalf of his chief—'certainly. What is it?' He was half afraid, in truth, of Shumate opening out in some new line, and was not sorry to see a diversion created by the jovial M'Glumpy.

'I only desire,' said that citizen, pushing up towards the front of the gathering—'I only desire, and I have it in my

heart to propose, just this one congenial sentiment: "To the health, long life, and happiness of the future Mrs. Frankfort, and all the little Frankies, and plenty of them too, by all that's propitious to the destinies of the town of Glooscap!"

Much kind feeling and some enthusiasm was evoked by this tender toast. Reference to and sentiments concerning marriage and the other sex have ever excited interest in any assemblage of men, and no doubt will continue to do so as long as man endures, or at least until woman's rights are established. When our politician had replied, as well as he could, to the good wishes of 'his friend, Mr. M'Glumpy,' for the interesting unknown, Quiggle whispered in his ear that the least he could do now was to grant 'his friend' the interview of which he was desirous. So, taking a cordial farewell of the Mayor, Councillors, and constituents, which farewell included a rather formal bow from Shumate, our politician, M'Glumpy, and Quiggle were soon walking together down the broad road which constituted the main street of the village.

'It was very good of you, Mr. M'Glumpy, to think of my future wife—if there is to be one—not to say the children. It's more than I have ever done myself,' observed Frankfort.

'What? You don't say the word, do ye? An' all the time I've been supposing that you were only delaying like till you got into Parliament to go straight in and win the other too. It would be so complate now,' he remarked, turning round to his Member confidentially: 'M.H.R., married, children, fine home, rest like from Parliament. Well, and a man ain't complate without it. Them is the very words that the Honourable Mr. Lamborn, at The Blocks there, says to our Jerry when he got his bit of land. "Jerry," says he—Mr. Lamborn often has a bit of a joke handy somewhere about him—"Jerry," says he, "what's a farm without the live stock?" "The live stock, Mr. Lamborn?" asks Jerry, quite simple. "Yes; the best of live stock—a good wife," says he. And, sure enough, Jerry took heed on him; and isn't Maggie Heffernan, the best girl in the country, mistress there now?'

'Ah well, happy Jerry! I am sorry I have no such bright vision before me,' remarked our politician.

'Well, well, Rimy, let us come on now from love to

business, for our Member has to be off directly !' exclaimed the little agent, who was quite aware that this tender proem on the marriage question was only Mr. M'Glumpy's polite way of leading on to the more serious objects of the interview.

'Business? What business, Mr. Quiggle?' exclaimed the other.

'Why, you know, Rimy, what you wanted to see us about.' The agent always identified himself and principal in this way. 'Spit it out, old man—spit it out,' said Quiggle, in a tone of cheerful exhortation.

'That? Oh, that's nothing. I needn't have stopped ye at all about that. I've no call to trespass upon the Member for myself. It's me sister-in-law at the Post Office that wanted to have a word with him. And here we are, to be sure, if you wouldn't mind stepping in a minute.'

They were at the Glooscap Post Office, as Mr. M'Glumpy had remarked; but the building was not wholly devoted to His Majesty's service. Over the door of the little shop was the name, 'Mary Garvin,' in large letters. On the right-hand front window were two large E.R.'s, and above was the inscription, 'Glooscap Post Office, Mary Garvin, Post-mistress'; while on the left was a window-front such as is often seen in an Irish village. For Mary Garvin, in changing her country, brought with her unchanged her native character and tastes. In this window were displayed specimens of the varied wares sold within. Bits of ladies' millinery, set off by sundry faded plates from fashionable society journals; a small collection of children's toys, whose dusty and faded appearance indicated a venerable age quite in contrast with their juvenile purpose; a few dingy packets of hard-looking note-paper, and very sharp, steely-looking steel pens, on which dingy paper, however, another *Iliad* or *Paradise Lost* could have been inscribed, if only the right person got hold of the steely pens; the usual and inevitable dirty glass jar, half-full of cloudy-looking sugar-candy, often gazed upon from the street by the children, who enjoyed even a good look at the sweets, and sundry stale cakes, fringed with packets of tape and papers of pins—these, with some odds and ends of fancy articles, occupied one portion of the window. Adjoining these, but collected together by

themselves, was a selection of things chiefly ecclesiastical, and belonging to the ancient Latin branch of the Christian Church, consisting of sundry rosaries (and beads) and clerical books, together with highly-coloured portraits of various saints (Saint Patrick himself occupying the place of honour), and of several venerated living prelates, including one that displayed, as well as a rough picture could, the noble profile and benevolent countenance of Leo the Thirteenth. Close to this clerical division was a secular, or rather a political, department, the chief interest of which appeared to centre in the episode of Robert Emmet being condemned to death in the law courts for fighting for Ireland. A few very green books, containing selections from the songs of Ireland, a worn copy of the second volume of O'Connell's speeches, a couple of small, bright little volumes of Tom Moore's national poems, a few much-bethumbed threepenny editions of *Napoleon's Book of Fate*, and sundry almanacs of the last year, composed the bulk of the literature on view in the window. Dotted on the border, round the whole of the wares, and in some cases hanging down by long strings from the top, were some aged specimens of fruit, including one pineapple in the centre that had once been good-looking, but which had swung there for weeks, like a too fastidious ballroom beauty, admired by all, but not claimed by any.

It appeared further, from a notice that was written on a large square piece of cardboard, and placed on the top of some oranges in this window, that the Postmistress undertook homely, but very useful, services for certain of the King's female subjects, as well as official ones for His Majesty himself. For on the card was the writing: 'Mrs. Garvin, Monthly Nurse, Certificated. Apply early.' And that she was highly successful in her ministrations was undoubted, though, in fact, the 'certificated' did not refer to any professional document accrediting her, but to the laudatory letters that she had received from time to time from patients who certified to her skill and care. Quiggle, indeed, when he had mentioned her casually to Frankfort early in the day, had jocosely remarked that she took much the same care of both His Majesty's mails and females in

and about Glooscap. He now, as they were going in, whispered to him that Mrs. Garvin, and M'Glumpy too, had belonged to the Meeks lot ; that Meeks had got her the billet ; that she was still rather sweet on Meeks, but that M'Glumpy and clan had, as he had stated before, voted straight. So he was to keep her free, let her go, and so on.

' Ah, Mrs. Garvin, there you are, to be sure. Hope I see you well and flourishing, too,—King's letters and King's babies coming in freely, and being attended to with your usual intelligence and skill, Mrs. Garvin. Here's the new Member. Off with the old love, on with the new: all's fair, you know, in love and politics. He is the man to take your fancy ; he is come to do whatever you want. Just name the word : the thing is done. Indeed it is,' continued the agent gaily, seating himself easily on the counter ; while our politician, having shaken hands with his fair constituent, was pointed to the only chair in the shop by a wave of her hand. A good-natured, easy-going-looking Irish-woman of middle age was Mary Garvin, redeemed from a natural tendency to slatternliness by the obligations of the dual positions which she held in serving the King at all times and being liable to be called out by her female neighbours at any time.

' And it's pleased I am to see you, Mr. Frankfort, and to become acquainted with you—being under Guv'ment meself ; though it's little I need any one's fair word for me: doin' the work as I do, I needs no favour.'

' That's quite right, Mrs. Garvin—that's the right way to talk, Mrs. Garvin: do your duty, and you have to beg no one's favour or good word on your behalf !' cordially exclaimed our politician.

Quiggle, who was getting uneasy about their time, and who knew well that they had not yet got to the real point of the interview, here struck in again.

' Right you are, Postmistress ! But what is this little matter that you wanted to see us about ? We have to be off to the city directly.'

' Oh, I've nothing on me mind to speak about. Just I wanted to see the new Member and make up my respects to him, and hoping he'll last as long as old Meeks, anyhow.'

‘Certainly, Postmistress ; but this here—you know, that your brother-in-law, Rimy, told us of—something that you——’ remarked Quiggle.

‘About the boy, ye know, Mary,’ interposed Mr. M’Glumpy, who, after all, seemed to know something about the real business of the interview.

‘The boy is it ye mean?’ responded the Postmistress. ‘Oh, that’s nothing, it is. It’s Terry you’re thinking of, is it? Here, Terry, come forward and show yourself to the gentleman.’

And Terence M’Glumpy, or Terry for short, who during the conversation was waiting at the end of the shop, ready to be called, stood forth to view. He was a large-framed, red-haired Irish boy of about twenty, uncouth and unkempt in appearance, but with a cheerful, good-tempered look about him. He was a son of one of M’Glumpy’s brothers who had still remained in the old land, and he had been brought up in one of the wildest parts of Connaught, where the school-master had only lately come effectively. Having been a weakly boy in his native land, his education had been neglected ; but he seemed to be intelligent, and in the genial climate of Excelsior he was getting quite strong. His father had sent him out to the uncle’s care, to seek his fortune. The uncle naturally turned to the Government to provide for him, and thought that the Glooscap Post Office offered a fair opening, especially as it was presided over by the aunt.

‘Ah, dear me, a fine young countryman of yours, Postmistress—quite a credit to the family ; and what can we do for Terry now?’ inquired the agent in his blandest tones. He felt that it would be good business to conciliate the whole M’Glumpy connection by some small personal service done for them.

‘Do for him?’ inquired the Postmistress, as if surprised by the inquiry. ‘Oh, there’s nothing to do for him that I know of. For certain, he wants a start somehow, to be sure—some bit of a sort of a billet. And, now that I mind it, the office here wants a boy of some sort to deliver them letters down the town. As Postmistress here now, I don’t hold by the neighbours all about the place having to come up here, wet or fine, to get hold of their letters. I’d like to see them properly delivered.’

‘Well, that now ain’t a big thing, anyway,’ chimed in M’Glumpy. ‘Before ye explained to me, when ye first spoke to me, I was thinking, Mary, that it was an increase to your salary, or a rise in the Service, ye might be after, that ye wanted to see the Member about. This ain’t much, anyhow. Fifteen bob a week would fix it up,’ turning round to our politician with an easy, triumphant wave of his hand.

Quiggle was pleased to find that it was such a small matter, and so was our politician, though he could not help thinking that the big boy who stood before him would find more useful work in following the plough or grappling with the trees of the forest. He felt that it would not do to raise small difficulties with his constituents, so he promised to support Mrs. Garvin’s application for a junior letter-carrier, and to recommend her nephew for the place. The elder M’Glumpy soon produced the formal application, which, it seemed, had been already filled in by him (he, indeed, being quite an expert in preparing such documents), and, in fact, it only wanted the signature of the Member for the district, certifying to the fitness of the applicant, and formally recommending him. As it so happened, this was the first time that our politician had given his patronage, in due formal document, as a Member of Parliament; and as he signed ‘E. F. Frankfort’ at the foot of the paper, he could not but be conscious of some sense of importance owing to the new power that he was thus exercising, joined to a feeling of responsibility for its proper use.

‘Now then, Terry, jump on the pony and make off to the Hospital at Brassville, as if the devil himself was behind ye, and be sure ye catch Surgeon Dillon, so as to get the medical examination and the doctor’s certificate all right; and then, me boy, ye may salute yourself as letter-carrier to the King’s Post Office at Glooscap. Don’t miss the Surgeon. He’s off by the first train in the morning.’

And Terry, thus exhorted, was soon tearing away on the pony along the main road to Brassville, to submit himself to the necessary medical examination by Myles Dillon.

‘Well, now, that’s all right, M’Glumpy,’ remarked Quiggle; ‘and as time’s short with us, we will take our leave

of the Postmistress here and follow the letter-carrier to the city.'

'Yes, we will be off now, Mr. M'Glumpy. I am glad to have been able to do you and Mrs. Garvin here any service,' said our politician; and as M'Glumpy seemed as if he was not yet quite ready to part with him, he added, interrogatively, 'Nothing more, I suppose?'

'Oh, nothing at all, and I am grateful to you, Mr. Frankfort!' exclaimed M'Glumpy. 'I don't know that there *is* anything more, unless ye could give me a bit of a note for my own boy, standing there beyont, over the way.' He pointed to a fine, active-looking fellow of twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, who was evidently thoroughly enjoying some jocular conversation with three or four other stalwart companions. They were all standing round the village saddler, who was repairing a saddle for young M'Glumpy on a bench on the pathway before his shop. The jokes appeared to be good, and the laughter rang out merrily. Even several of the village dogs that were collected around seemed to enter into the fun, and looked up at their respective masters with gently-wagging tails and pleased, sympathy-enjoying countenances.

'Oh, indeed, and what does your son want?' remarked our politician, a little disappointed at finding that he was not quite out of the wood yet.

'Ah, then, it's nothing he wants but a bit of a note.'

'Bit of a note, but what for?'

'Why, he's off to Klondyke, ye know.'

'Off to Klondyke! Then what use can a note from me be? What is he off to Klondyke for?'

'Why, to get a billet there in the police; the pay is tiptop, anyway. And a note from your Honour, as a Member of Parliament, might shove him in straight, as snug as anything.'

'All right, Mr. M'Glumpy!' exclaimed our politician, climbing into the buggy in a desperate manner; 'just send the particulars to Mr. Quiggle, and I'll see what can be done. Good-bye, Mrs. Garvin. Good-bye.'

'Well, it is surprising how they run after a billet, as they call it!' exclaimed our politician, as they drove down the street.

‘It’s the way they have got, sir—it’s the way,’ answered Quiggle. ‘Why, only the other day old Pinkerton asked for a billet; it was the first thing he thought of when he got out.’

‘Who is Pinkerton?’ inquired Frankfort.

‘One of your constituents who got into trouble years ago. I mind him well in the old days. Not a bad chap, but such a temper! Got into a row with a man there in Brassville, who he thought was cheating him; stabbed him with a pocket-knife; bad wound; ten years in Bull Bull Penitentiary; excellently conducted when in; petitions for release after seven years from neighbours; release granted; Governor of gaol says to him, “Very well-conducted man, Pinkerton; glad to help you any way.” “Please, sir,” says he, “would you give me a note to His Honour the Minister?” “What for, Pinkerton? You are clear of us now,—free pardon,—no further hold on you now.” And what do you think was his answer?’ exclaimed Quiggle, looking round to his companion, and enjoying his expected surprise at the story—‘what was his answer? “I was only thinking, sir,” says he, “that perhaps His Honour would not mind giving me a billet somewhere about the Penitentiary, now that he knows of me.” You would have thought,’ the agent continued with a quiet laugh, ‘that he had had enough of Government. But no, a billet—a billet. “Ever of thee I am fondly”’—and Quiggle kept murmuring to himself the verses of this favourite song, leaving our politician to his own meditations on the subject of billets, and enjoying the prospect of a quiet evening with Myles Dillon, after the varied experience of the day.

They arrived at the Lake Reservoir in good time, and, parting with Quiggle, who promised to call later in the evening to arrange for to-morrow’s work, Frankfort hastened upstairs to his sitting-room, where, sure enough, he found Myles Dillon himself, quietly reading the *Life of Richard Owen*, the great naturalist, which he had slipped into his Gladstone bag as he was leaving town, so as to be always sure of having some one by him worth speaking to, as he expressed it, while he was on his journey. He had just seen young M’Glumpy and passed him for the Service. Soon

dinner was over, and the two settled themselves for a quiet evening. The soothing influence of tobacco was not wanting, and Myles, as he lay stretched on the sofa in his accustomed style of evening repose, listened with interest and occasional criticism while his companion recounted the various episodes of the day, which brought before them scenes of life and character which were equally new to both narrator and listener.

‘But now you haven’t told me of the finest of all your efforts yet, Edward Fairlie,’ remarked Myles in a quiet tone.

‘Which is that, Myles? I don’t know of any very special one.’

‘What? You don’t call to mind your unique and quite original nomination of a letter-carrier, warranted to be the only one of its kind—all previous patents cancelled—the famous M’Glumpy specimen.’

‘I don’t know what you are driving at. I gave a nomination to a boy of that name. I suppose he is as good as another for a small village. By the way, too, that was my first nomination, as it so happened, as Member of Parliament. I mean to be very fair about my nominations, and very particular too.’

‘I am pleased to hear it, Teddy. There be plenty room for improvement from your start, anyway. But I thought that, as it was the first, you would be extra careful and a bit nervous—like a juvenile surgeon cutting off his first leg, or a young lawyer making out his first bill of costs.’

‘Why, what are you at, Dillon? What’s wrong with the boy for a place like Glooscap?’

‘All right, my friend—all right. If Ed. Fairlie Frankfort, with his first-rate conscience, is at ease about it, far be it from plain Myles Dillon to complain. But I confess it took me a bit aback.’

‘What took you aback—the look of the boy?’

‘Why, what, really, don’t you know? No? Then you’re worse than the farmer’s stopped clock, for it was right once a day, anyhow. Why, then, let me a tale unfold. Tall young compatriot of mine presents himself to pass medical examination as letter-carrier, together with nomina-

tion signed "E. F. Frankfort, M.H.R." All correct so far, my boy, thinks I. Chest measured proper number of inches, height correct, limbs and trunk sound, eyesight good, blew up the lung-tester famously. "Why, you'll do, as far as I am concerned, Mr. M'Glumpy," says I; "just read over that certificate and see if the particulars as to name, age, and so on are correct. If so, I'll endorse it." "Read what, your Honour?" says he. "Read that," says I, putting the paper before him. "I ax your Honour's pardon," says he, "but I don't read or write." "Don't read or write!" says I, dropping the paper as if it burnt me. "Devil a bit!" says he. "Devil a bit!" says I; "and then how the——," but I pulled myself up, as I knew that strong language would be unbecoming from the Government official, even in these novel circumstances, and only addressed the young man in my blindest tones, and said: "My youthful friend, would you mind explaining to me, merely for the sake of the knowledge that you will impart to me, how you propose to deliver His Majesty's letters at their proper destination, and to the people named outside of them, when you are unable to read the superscription?" "Quite aisy, your Honour. Won't the aunt there, the Postmistress, put them down into me hand, and as I walk up the street the neighbours, all decent people, will just lay houldt on what belongs to them, each of them." "Very well, Mr. M'Glumpy, as far as I am concerned, I can certify that you are physically competent to deliver a twenty-four-volume encyclopædia; and perhaps you will permit me to add that, on the whole, I am pleased that I do not reside in the interesting town in which you are to officiate." And the young man smiled upon me cheerfully and departed happy with his completed certificate as letter-carrier.

'I know you are only humbugging, Myles. But it is really too serious a matter to joke about. Gracious powers! it would be a fiasco if there were anything in it—and it my very first nomination!' And our politician turned round to look straight at Dillon to see if he really meant it. Myles looked quite serious. 'Why, surely Quiggle must have known of such an absurdity,—and he would never have let me perpetrate such a thing. Poor Meeks could not have done worse. But there must be some mistake. Oh! here

is Quiggle,' he continued, as that gentleman walked into the room, full of his plans for the next day's work.

'Why, Quiggle, Mr. Dillon has just astounded me by telling me that that M'Glumpy boy, when he was examined for the medical certificate, on being asked to read over and sign the paper, coolly told him that he could neither read nor write. And there my nomination goes in for a letter-carrier who can't read a single direction on the letters. It is such a fiasco to begin my public patronage with. How could you let me do such a thing?'

Quiggle, who, as the reader may have observed, enjoyed the humorous side of things, could not refrain from laughter at the very absurdity of the thing. 'Ha, ha, ha! that is not bad! But I give you my solemn affirmation, Mr. Frankfort, that I had no notion of such a thing. Ha, ha! it is really too bad. Now I see what M'Glumpy was working up so carefully for, the old miscreant. Ha, ha! I can't help a laugh at it. And how are the people to get their letters. Did the young man say? It's something quite new. It's rather good now.'

'The young official explained to me,' replied Dillon, 'that he would carry the letters round in a batch in his hand, and each decent citizen was to pick out his own proper and peculiar communication. Rather good, as you say, that.'

'Well, now that is quite original. Ha, ha! it is indeed,' laughed Quiggle.

'What is there to laugh at?' asked our politician. 'It is such a blunder; and liable to be misrepresented too, as the family voted for me. I will write to the Postmaster-General to-morrow explaining the thing and recalling my nomination.'

'Well, well, it is too bad of Rimy—that it is indeed; I wouldn't have thought it,' remarked Quiggle. 'But you have learnt in time. You can write to the Postmaster-General, and if you want the rights of it known, you could tell Secker, Secretary of the State Workers' Association, when he calls upon you to-morrow. He speaks for the whole Service, and to the whole Service too, when he chooses, does Secker Secretary, as we call him.'

It appeared that Secker Secretary had returned from

Great Gorge to Brassville especially to see our politician and to lay before him certain views concerning the claims of the National State workers upon the Government of the country. The Association had supported him at the recent election ; but more, Quiggle explained, because they knew that Meeks could not succeed (and they never cared to be on the losing side) than that they were wholly satisfied with the attitude of our politician. Secker Secretary was anxious to ascertain with more precision what his opinions were with regard to the National State workers and their rights ; both with a view to their mutual relations in Parliament now and also their action with regard to him at future elections. So it had been arranged that the two should meet the next morning—the politician and the man who claimed to make politicians—and Quiggle laid special stress upon the importance of this meeting and the need there was of keeping her free before the wind and steady, neither bringing her to, nor letting her off, more than necessary. And having arranged the other ‘fixtures’ for the morrow, as he termed them, the little man hastened home to Mrs. Quiggle, who always sat up for him, and who, after she had put the children to bed, was beguiling the time by reading a moving serial love story that appeared twice a week in the *Trumpeter*.

When, next morning, Norrie Secker, Esquire, General Secretary of the National State Workers’ Association, was shown upstairs, our politician found himself in the presence of no common man. If Norrie Secker was not a great man, he was certainly one of the remarkable men of the country, to borrow a phrase from the land of his birth, the United States. He was born in Chicago, having an Englishman for his father and a Scotchwoman, Maggie Norrie by name, for his mother ; and the father not taking sufficient interest in the affair to look personally after his baptism, the mother attended to that ceremony, and had him duly baptized by the minister of the kirk that she sometimes frequented, Norrie Secker. Both parents belonged to the poorest class in the social scale, and had emigrated towards the end of the fifties, when paupers from Europe still came at the rate of about a thousand a week to the land of freedom. The pair gravitated towards Chicago, and soon mingled among

the rather squalid, uneasy, dissatisfied section of the wage-earners of that city ; and before long, Secker senior, growing more and more discontented with many things in his lot in life, at last became discontented with his wife and cheerless home, and one morning disappeared for ever from the domestic scene,—no one knew, or ever discovered, whither. The mother, now practically a widow, took in what washing she could get ; but this industry gave her and the boy only a scanty living, owing to the untiring and adroit competition of the Chinaman ; and so young Norrie, when a boy of eight or nine, was thrown a good deal on his own resources to earn what he could during the day, picking up an elementary education at the night-school, to which the poor mother providently sent him, and to which he willingly and regularly went.

There is undoubtedly such a thing as the political instinct—a liking and an aptitude for the movement and excitement of public affairs, which is quite different from the talent of the business man or the power of the money-maker. This instinct admits of a wide scale of gradation, from the giant scope of a Bismarck down to the lowly methods of Mr. Walter Crane of the Water and Irrigation Bureau, with whom the reader is already acquainted. Norrie Secker was neither a Bismarck on the one hand nor a Crane on the other ; but he certainly had the political instinct strong within him, and by the time that we become acquainted with him, it had blossomed into quite respectable proportions ; though its early scope was naturally of a humble and limited character. Its first experience, in fact, if experience it may be termed, was in proclaiming aloud the political headings of the newspapers that he was selling in Chicago streets, mingled with all the other announcements—sporting events, fires, embezzlements, suicides, divorce, and death. While in the main following the list of striking events given to him and the other news-boys by the news-agents, he boldly and skilfully varied his cries, and occasionally even invented them, so as to suit the different classes or sets of purchasers among whom his rapid course through the city might bring him. Critics might say that this habit alone was a training for the lower phases of political life.

But Norrie Secker continued all the time to learn diligently at the night-school, and also to pick up much practical education in the street; and when only a lad of fifteen he was hired by Max Lautenbach, the blind politician of his native State, to attend him and lead him about when he went to serve his term in the State Legislature.

Here Norrie Secker was in his element. Though not admitted within the precincts of the Chamber itself when it was sitting, he had entrance, leading his patron, who was to him a kind master, to all lobbies, committee rooms, refreshment saloons, private bars, caucuses and conferences of members, and all other places where the restless stream of politicians flowed and eddied. He hearkened to the unofficial talk of Members, and noted how often it differed in tone, and at times in substance, from their public declarations. All plotting, negotiating, pulling of diverse strings, plans for outmanœuvring the adversary, projects for counter-propositions that were to defeat the other ones, without seeming to go directly against them, all keeping of it dark till the proper time, all arrangements for dealing warily with doubtful votes, and with men who appeared in a questionable shape—all this he sucked in as naturally as he had his infantile nourishment not many years before. Not only did he not feel tired as he waited in the Gallery hour after hour to be ready to lead his employer back to the hotel, but he enjoyed himself if there was some development of party tactics going forward, some flank movement by one side, or, as sometimes did happen, a complete wheel round and change of front. In short, he profited by being behind the scenes, and knew as much of the make-believe of politics as a call-boy at the theatre does of the tinsel of the stage.

As he grew up, so he also increased in intelligence and breadth of view, and when he migrated to Excelsior he might claim to be considered an intelligent, and even broad-minded, specimen of the *genus* political manager,—we will not say wire-puller, as that term has acquired an objectionable character that must not be imputed to Secker Secretary. But his ruling instinct, the main element in his composition, as Nature had mixed it, was for manipulating men and plotting out affairs, so as to carry his point, and especially so

as to circumvent the opponents or somebody else. He liked to gain his point, but particularly to gain it by a little management. It was not so agreeable to him if he got it by open direct action. Much as he was interested in politics, he preferred taking this interest from outside. His own private opinion was that he would become dependent if he went inside, with more of the name but none of the reality of power. He would have to obey others, and be all complaisance to them, instead of this being the case with others in regard to him. It was thus not his ambition, at present at least, to be a legislator himself, but only to control those who were legislators. He used to observe that the greatest generals had, themselves unseen, sometimes directed their battles from behind a tree.

Personally Secker Secretary was what might be termed a respectable man. No evil thing could be fairly laid to his charge ; and his dress and carriage was that of a reputable citizen. But he had an instinctive bias against what he used to term, with but an imperfect pronunciation of the word, the bourgeois sort of people, and a natural leaning to the views of the restless and unsuccessful ranks of the social State. The mere fact that any proposal or idea startled the bourgeois and made them open their eyes, rather recommended it to Secker Secretary. That it upset their staid ideas, and particularly that it trenched on their supposed rights and easements, was all in its favour with him. On the other hand, *outré* proposals or shady transactions were tolerantly regarded by him so long as they came from or compromised those whom no one could accuse of belonging to the 'respectable' people. He would not commit himself to the proposal, nor directly defend the transaction ; but he would speak of them with a reserve and tolerance such as a man displays in public, with regard to mishaps in the family. All this was only so much homage paid to what he considered the stronger power in politics—the safe side for a man to attach himself to. It was part of his principles to regard with a jealous eye government, subordination, discipline, repression, and the principle of authority, whether as applied to men's ideas, their language, or their actions. There was one cardinal exception, however, to this tendency of his, and that was in

regard to the rule and guidance of the State Workers' Association in all its many branches. There his tone was quite the other way. There his chief article of faith was to secure exact organisation and perfect obedience to the commands of the central Executive. An open enemy he did not mind, nay, might respect. But the man who would dare to raise dissent with headquarters, in the ranks of the State workers, he regarded as Fritz the Unique would have contemplated one of his corporals if he threatened to mutiny ; or John Jervis, Earl of St. Vincent, would have looked upon one of his bo'suns if he had stepped upon the quarter-deck and proposed that the fleet should have a spell home, instead of prolonging the blockade of Cadiz. For your political boss, though he cannot hang or flog men, is just as intolerant of contradiction as was ever John Jervis or Fritz the Unique.

Secker was at first employed in the office of the State Workers' Association as one of the typewriters ; but he soon attracted the notice of members of the Executive by the shrewd and bold suggestions which he would deferentially suggest to them in regard to the questions raised by the correspondence ; and before long he was made chief clerk, and in due time was chosen unanimously for the position of General Secretary, which meant, particularly with such a man as Secker, manager and engineer of the whole Association. In addition to undeniable ability, Secker Secretary possessed that quality invaluable for success in practical politics, of perfect confidence in himself. The great military genius of our time, Von Moltke, after the skilful campaign by which he conquered Alsen and Jutland from the Danes, in writing confidentially to his wife, expresses doubt, referring to proposed military arrangements, whether he was competent to take the chief command of a corps, as he 'had not sufficient talent for matters of detail.' Secker Secretary would not, in a similar case, have felt this diffidence. He thought highly of his own powers, and the general deference of the public tended to strengthen his estimate of himself.

When he and our politician had shaken hands, and he had sat down, with his countenance in repose after the momentary animation of the meeting, Frankfort saw before him a short, rather squat, and certainly massively-built man,

with a broad face, firm mouth, and thick nose, pointing skywards, with over the whole personality a plausible, self-reliant, make-myself-at-home air. The large grey eyes looked out at you and into you when the owner addressed you, and apparently did so trustfully, and the more critical the topic of speech, the more confidently they turned upon you. But if you returned straight back this trustful look, when eyes met, a sort of mesmeric influence or magnetic repulsion, or some other occult power, to be felt rather than explained, made you conscious that you were met by a survey quite different from the unsuspecting gaze of childhood. The reader will have gathered that Secker Secretary was not a man of refined appearance ; but not the less did he earnestly seek to adopt a manner which, if it could not be said to be truly refined, was at least an effort in that direction. It is curious how persistently people, and sensible people, will strive to be other than they are, and as Nature has designed them. The ugly man will long to be thought a tolerably well-looking fellow, and though he has a face like a tomato, yet he will be proud of his small foot. The weak man wishes to be regarded as a Bismarck for firmness, the cleric apes the venial foibles of the man of the world, the naval officer boasts of his successes in the hunting field, the soldier, like Wolfe, the hero of Quebec, sighs at times for the reputation of the poet ; and Norrie Secker's ambition, with all his plebeian sympathies, was to be taken for a gentlemanly man.

‘I trust I am not intruding upon your leisure, or, indeed, I should say your busy moments, for I know what elections are—and the after-consequences of elections, too,’ he observed, as he sat down and looked straight at our politician, to see what he was like near at hand. So far, he had only seen him once or twice at a distance, at some University Extension Lectures that Frankfort had given in Miranda.

‘Not at all, Mr. Secker,’ replied our politician. ‘The obligation is on my side for your coming back from Great Gorge to meet me.’

‘Fact is, to be quite candid, I am glad to learn, Mr.—Professor Frankfort, all I can about the gentlemen who are chosen to the great position of a seat in the Parliament of

the nation ; and then, to be sure, I also hope to induce those honourable gentlemen to look down even from their high estate and consider the wants and complaints of the workers—the State workers of the Province. And so, Professor, you have come through with flying colours—no mishap at all ?’

‘Yes, I have been very successful. My agent tells me that Mr. Hiram Brickwood, one of the leading local men in your Association, and his friends supported me. I am sure that I am very much indebted to them ; the more so as, except one conversation with the local Secretary, there was no asking for pledges or promises or undertakings of any sort.’

‘Ah ! to be sure—quite right. Fact is,’ said the Secretary confidentially to our politician—‘fact is, Meeks—poor Meeks, if I may be excused for so terming one who was a Member of Parliament—poor Meeks being worked out, we accepted you as a gentleman of honour—and how much there is in honour, Mr. Frankfort !—who would not only be as good as his word, but better. And so you have triumphed !—though I am far from saying by our votes only. I understand that you were generally supported. I trust that your experiences have been agreeable—nothing that a gentleman could complain of ?’

And the Secretary turned and looked at our politician in an interrogative manner, but with a trustful air. It was his habit to make out all he could about every election, and particularly about every new actor as he stepped on the political boards. And, in truth, he wanted to know how Frankfort, the Professor, and what some considered the lofty style of politician, got on in the contest with the experienced though worn-out Meeks. ‘Disappointing to have the bottom knocked out of the Reservoir that way,’ he added.

‘Many were disappointed at that ; but after the failure of the Loan, there was no more to be said about it. Yes, my experiences have been agreeable—no mishap, I may say. The most absurd thing that happened was only yesterday. It’s so absurd—and yet it’s provoking too, though it is a small affair.’

‘No, truly ; you don’t say so ? No encounter, I trust,

with Miss Gazelle, or old Schoolmaster Nickerson, who, Brickwood tells me, is the odd man out in public affairs here?’

‘Oh no ; quite an absurd thing—it makes me laugh to think of it. A nomination to the State Service—and my very first, too, as it so happens.’

‘Well, well. I suppose the old story—the square peg in the round hole, I presume?’

‘No ; more absurd than that. The man, or boy, in this case had no claim to be in at all. Out at Glooscap there, just as I was coming away, a young fellow was brought to me to recommend him for letter-carrier. He seemed right enough for a small place. Quiggle knew the friends. I signed the nomination, and afterwards, when he went for medical examination before Surgeon Dillon, it turned out that he could neither read nor write. You can imagine how vexed I was ; it was too absurd. I am writing to the Postmaster-General about it by to-day’s mail.’

‘Now, truly ; you don’t mean that ? It certainly is the only nomination of the kind that I ever heard of. Sometimes they do complain of Members’ nominations, to be sure.’

‘Of course I assumed that, like all the other boys about, he was fairly educated. It seems that he was only lately come out from one of the wildest Irish counties.’

‘To be sure—to be sure. It never occurred to you to ask before signing ?’ remarked Secker Secretary.

‘No, I tell you, such a thing as his not being able to read or write never crossed my mind. If it had——’

‘Oh, just so—just so. It shows, does it not, what odd things may happen to one quite casually, as it were ? Now, they accuse us of all sorts of things in regard to the State Service ; but they can’t say that we have ever defended having letter-carriers that could not read. No, Mr. Frankfort, we are not quite so bad as that,’ the Secretary added, in a cheerful tone. He was pleased to hear of this nomination. He assumed at once, and correctly, that the boy’s friends had voted for Frankfort, and, absurd as the thing was in one aspect, it was capable, with some embellishment, of a more serious application, especially as against

any one who would attempt to set up any very high standard in such matters. The more that he knew about and against every man on the political chess-board, the better pleased was Secker Secretary.

‘Well, well, Professor, the mention of this little episode of yours in the ranks of the State workers brings up at once the subject of our interview. I was desirous of seeing you, in order to lay before you our views, our claims—just, I trust, you will find them—our grievances. You know our motto: “Our Rights, not others’ Wrongs.”’

‘And a very good motto too, Mr. Secker. Is there any particular topic connected with the Service that now demands attention?’

‘Several, Professor—several. There is the rank injustice proposed in the Bill that the Government tried to pass last session, to regulate, as it is termed, the State Service—to regulate us into slavery. Promotion was to be by what is termed merit, diligent conduct, and not seniority. That would mean that the men must curry favour with the foreman in a workshop to get his good word to the shop manager, and his again to the head of the branch, and so on. Encouraging servility. The automatic system is plainly the just one. No favouritism. Every man gets his opportunity; and opportunity, you know, Professor, makes the man. Then all right of appeal in workaday matters, from the official chief to the Minister, whether in Post Office, Trams and Rails, Police, Education, practically taken away. We should have been the veritable serfs of half-a-dozen elderly gentlemen of more or less density to the liberal and progressive ideas of our age. In the Trams and Rails the difficulty is partly met already by the Advisory Council, which assists and rather controls the Director. We want this system to work freely, and to work in all departments as it does in the Trams and Rails. Then, of course, there is our scheme of classification and wages, to ensure a living wage to the men. I am sure that we can rely upon you to help us. You would do injustice to no man.’

‘Certainly not; but as to the Bill, I have not read it yet, and, before pledging myself, I would like to do so, and to consider all that is involved.’

‘All that is involved?’

‘Yes. There is the question of revenue involved in the classification. Possibly, too, it might be found inconvenient to practically work some of the Departments under the conditions you refer to.’

‘But I trust you would not place convenience above justice?’

‘By no means; yet in all walks of life there is a possibility of some injustice, and we cannot positively guard against it.’

‘Permit me there, Professor, to point out to you a distinction, which, I am sure, your clear mind will see at once, between Government employment and private employment. If John Brown wrongfully uses his servant, that is a private matter. Public faith, public justice is not involved. But if Government underpays or wrongfully dismisses one of its servants, then public faith and public justice are concerned. Should not, then, Parliament control the scale of wages, and should there not be an appeal to the Minister who is responsible for the just dealing of the people?’

‘That involves,’ observed Frankfort, ‘the constant appeal to Parliament. The whole thing becomes a political affair. Can you carry on commercial undertakings upon such terms?’

‘My dear Professor, why not? I should hope that an advanced politician like yourself does not hold that commercial undertakings cannot be successfully worked unless they are unjustly worked? We are quite ready to trust Parliament to control our wages. As the Honourable Mr. M‘Grorty happily expressed it in the debate last session, Parliament is the High Court which regulates the work and wages of the State workers, just as the Courts of Arbitration do for the wage-earners outside. You cannot go higher than the High Court of Parliament itself, can you? We only ask for justice. Our rights, not others’ wrongs.’

‘Still, if your object is that these public undertakings should be successfully carried on, you have to consider what the effect of this political action will be.’

‘A slight fallacy, Professor, lurks, if I may say so, in

your use of the word "successfully." If you mean successfully in the shopkeeper's sense, then let me observe that that is not the object of the State. The object of the State is to carry on the public business upon conditions that are fair to the workers as well as to the public. There are two parties to be considered. The shopkeeper only thinks of one.'

'Most certainly full justice should be done to the workers. The difficulty is in arranging, politically, what is justice—indeed, their arranging for themselves, for they are such a dominating political power. Then, you see, the outside workers, whom you don't protect, have to pay for this.'

'Pardon me ; we do protect them too, to some extent. Soon we hope to secure to all the proper wage and due security from caprice on the part of employers. We must begin somewhere. Charity begins at home, but it need not end there.'

'A noble object, truly. I wish we could be sure that Nature will provide this fair and easy life for every one. At present, as you know, the Province loses heavily by its State workers. Only a young country like ours could stand it.'

'And whose fault is that? If I might say so without disrespect, the fault of the Government. Are we to pay for that? You would not, I presume, from what I have learned of you, propose to repudiate or lessen the interest on the State Bonds because the works constructed do not pay the interest. You would not, I imagine, say to the bondholders, "Here, take three per cent instead of five, because our Trams and Rails don't pay." Yet that is what you say to the poor labourer when you offer him six shillings a day instead of eight. The State does not repudiate its debts to the rich, but it does to the poor. Justice is all we seek.'

'But the farmer cannot get even six shillings a day for his men. Who is to fix the right wage and who is to pay it is still the difficulty.'

'If the people are fit to govern the State,' said Secker, looking confidently at Frankfort, and speaking in an assumed apologetic tone—'if the people *are* fit to govern the State, I should presume that they are competent to determine what is the proper wage for, at least, the State to pay its workers.

As to who will pay the wages, why, the taxpayer—the people again,’ the Secretary continued. ‘In fact, the people pay themselves. Taxation, Professor, can do much in a young country, with boundless free soil, no army, no navy, no costly regal establishments—nothing, in fact, to do with its wealth but to distribute it to the right people. You are a friend to government by the people, are you not, Mr. Frankfort?’

‘Certainly, Mr. Secker—the higher the wages that can be fairly earned, the better for us all. I would like to provide handsomely for all workers. The difficulty your statement suggests still is that you propose to do for a few, who are a political power, what you cannot do for all, and at the expense of the rest. It would be different if the State employed everybody, and had money from somewhere to pay everybody.’

‘As to that we shall see—we shall see. Meanwhile, I am concerned for the State workers, who, as you truly say, are a political power. We have arguments, and we have arms too, I may say. Taken altogether, we number about one-fourth of the workers of the Province. No feeble body, Professor, when we act as one. For example—to put an extreme case, and one a little outside politics, certainly—if they were to drive us to desperation, and to the unhappy resource of a general strike—what then? Trams and Rails, Post Office, Police—all paralysed. The Social State could not get on for a day without us. To be sure, I am only speaking confidentially to a gentleman; personally, I would not countenance such a thing for a moment. No more than I do turning out Members or Governments, unless in some very extreme case indeed.’

‘But, strong as you are, you are still only a minority of the electors, Mr. Secker. You are not surely so numerous as to be able to turn out Governments at your pleasure.’

‘Ah! but bear in mind the power of a united vote, going for its bread. An unjust cry against us may at times rouse the public, but in the even tenor of political life the general public are a mob to our organised force. Besides, we carry the outside workers with us. It is all the cause of labour. But what I have said, mark me, is confidential. Don’t misunderstand me. I deprecate all extreme courses.

I never sanction them in our private meetings. In fact, I don't even favour putting out individual Representatives—unless they positively deny us justice. No, no, Professor! "Our rights, not others' wrongs."

'I am glad to know that, Mr. Secker,' said our politician, with a grave smile. 'Else you would be rather a formidable menace to the political world and the Government of the day.'

'True, I cannot deny it. Yet, surely, Professor, you don't object to our defending ourselves? The State gives us votes. We are entitled, I presume, to vote together. Is it reasonable to expect poor men not to use those votes to protect the bread of their wives and children? Are they to refrain and let their families be pinched—perhaps starved—lest it should cost that vague entity, the State, too much? You are a scholar, I understand, Mr. Frankfort, versed in history. I ask you, have aristocracies ever spared their countries' revenues in the like case?'

'Certainly they have not. Yet the difficulty remains all the same now for those whose duty it is to think for that same vague entity that you mention. Your main points, however, I gather, are automatic promotion, the right of appeal to the political Minister, and the general control of the scale of wages by the political power—Parliament, in fact.'

'Quite correct, Professor: these are the main points, as you say. When the men press lesser matters,' continued the Secretary, speaking in a deprecating tone, 'such as the limitation of the number of apprentices, absolute fixing of hours in all cases, free passes for holidays, and so on, I always say to them, "Put your shoulder to the big wheels, and the little ones will go round of themselves." And that reminds me, may I here present you, Professor, with a copy of the Bill that Mr. Brereton, the Premier, brought in last session, to classify the Service, together with a few criticisms and proposals of mine marked in the margin? I may at the same time hand you a copy of our Bill, the one that we circulated among Members. It, of course, contains all the points that I have glanced at.'

'Thank you,' said our politician, turning over the pages.

'I was not in politics then, but, as I remember, the Government were unable to go on with this one.'

'How could they? You will notice at a glance that we could not consent to such a settlement. I tried all I could to come to an agreement, but old Mr. Brereton, you see, is rather a positive man, he is,' said the Secretary, 'and he, in fact, wanted his Bill, and we wanted ours, so there we were. Nothing could be done. We thought it better to put off the whole thing till after the general election, when we could have the aid of new minds and new men, like yourself, Professor. And we were right, as the event proves. I think I can now claim a majority of Members for our Bill, and generally for the justice of our other claims. Mr. Brereton used to be always giving us the old advice, "Better take half a loaf than have no bread," but now we will take the whole loaf.'

'I see that there is a difference between the two scales of classification of about £250,000 a year. That is a large sum for a population of not quite three millions.'

'That is hardly correct, Professor. The initial cost, the difference between the two minima, has to be increased even under the Honourable Mr. Brereton's plan, before the ultimate cost, the difference between the two maxima, can be weighed. The real difference is the difference between the maxima. It goes over a term of years. I should say,' continued the Secretary, having quickly marked some figures on his gilt-edged pocket-book, 'that the real extra cost would fall short of £200,000 a year; and that, you observe, Professor, represents the difference between content among the workers and discontent; or rather, I should say, more important even still, the difference between justice and injustice.'

'I see that in your scale of rates you give all alike, strong and weak, efficient and inefficient.'

'How can you, my dear Professor, I would ask you as a sensible man, distinguish in a general scale? Do you wish to introduce official patronage and favouritism? Besides,' added the Secretary, extending his arm, and looking at Frankfort in an expostulatory manner, 'is it not obviously better for the Province to keep the old and feeble doing

something than to have to keep them doing nothing in our asylums ?'

'Well, then, Mr. Secker, I shall carefully consider this Bill, and endeavour to do what is fair to both the public and the workers. There is no other point, I think ?' remarked our politician, not unwilling to bring this critical discussion to a close.

'Nothing ; that's all, Professor. Of course, after the new Classification Bill is introduced, the second reading will be postponed for a couple of months so that the different branches can consider the details. It's a long Bill, sir. No joke to master all the particulars of the schedules, and each little band of workers has to be considered.'

'I am not very familiar with Parliamentary practice yet, but I should suppose that the time you want could be got, and what is fair to all parties done.'

'Ah ! that's just it—fair to all. I trust the Government will be that—I do, indeed. Of course, if they absolutely refuse to give us justice—which I don't for a moment anticipate—why, then possibly——'

'But surely,' interposed Frankfort, 'we may expect that free open discussion of your claims will show the real merits of the questions at issue.'

'My dear sir, that is what I am saying. I was only about to add, when you favoured me with your last remark, that if those charged with the administration of public affairs should fail in this primary duty and seek to prevent Parliament from acting for us, why, then——'

Frankfort seemed about to interpose again with some remark or inquiry, but the Secretary quietly continued—'if they should fail, nay, what then ? Why, Parliamentary complications would naturally ensue, in which it would soon be seen who were for justice to the workers.' The Secretary pronounced 'Parliamentary' with marked emphasis on each syllable of that many-syllabled word.

'Why, if any claim is proper to be entertained by Parliament,' remarked our politician, 'we surely need not anticipate ill from the House, or any section of it, Government or other.'

'Just so, Professor ; but in the supposititious case I was

putting we might—I only say we might—I trust not, but we might have to ask fair-minded men—men,’ said the Secretary with emphasis, ‘whom we can cheerfully and unitedly support at the polling booths, to go a little further——’

‘A little further than justice?’

‘No, but this : looking beyond the mere question raised by the particular issue, to deal with a Government that would perpetrate a wrong—a public wrong, sir,’ said the Secretary, turning slowly in his chair as if in deep thought, and looking on one side of Frankfort to the window beyond. Then he added with vehemence, ‘Is the man, or the set of men, who would wrong the poorest pick and shovel man fit, I would ask with confidence, to be trusted with the interests of the whole people?’

‘Certainly not, and I am quite ready to do justice, only I must first see what justice is,’ replied our politician decisively.

‘Ah! hope I don’t intrude, indeed I do. I shouldn’t have dared to disturb our Lord the King here!’ exclaimed Quiggle, bustling into the room, waving his hand deferentially at the mighty Secretary, and speaking in that way described as half jest, whole earnest, ‘but Hiram is below, and says that he must see you and can’t wait much longer—something about passes on the Trams and Rails for the holidays. He is rather short at times, is Hiram. I told him I’d make bold to let you know.’

‘Ah, well, then, I think we have finished, Professor. I am glad to learn your generally enlightened views. On behalf of the workers, I wish you a brilliant Parliamentary career, and trust that we shall always find you foremost in the Representative’s first duty—the redress of wrongs.’ And shaking hands with our politician in a rather stately manner, while he honoured with a nod Quiggle (whose pleasantry he excused on the principle that a cat may look upon an emperor), he departed, and soon was settling with Hiram Brickwood the details of the demand for free Tram passes for the holidays. He was by no means satisfied with the attitude of our politician ; but he was too good a judge of men to push matters further with him just then. Were he

dealing with Meeks, he would have laid down directly the conditions upon which he could have the support of the Association. But he recognised the value of an independent, impartial advocate such as the new Member for Brassville would be, were he once convinced of the justice of their claims; and he rightly judged that it would be better, if possible, to convince him than to try to coerce him. All the same, he made a mental note of the first official nomination of Professor Frankfort.

On the other hand, our politician, upon a review of the whole matter, as shown at the meeting of the State Workers reported in the *Rising Sun*, and as further developed by Secker Secretary, could not but feel the sympathy natural to every thoughtful, not to say humane, man with the efforts of labour to improve its lot, and a satisfaction at the strong position it holds in our times, when it can fearlessly, and even aggressively, advance its claims to consideration. That some of these claims might be unreasonable was only natural. The difficulty was owing to the system, not to any fault of the men who worked under it. All classes try to secure the most that they can for themselves, being good advocates but bad judges of their own cause. This is natural, to be expected, and not to be complained of. John Bright said that the English aristocracy made the public service a system of outdoor relief for their families. And if the workers have now their turn, it is certainly better so than to have them voiceless and oppressed. The trouble comes in when the political element gets mixed with the industrial, and the State being the employer in commercial concerns, the numerous ranks of employees are at once its servants and its masters: its servants in the workshop and its master at the ballot-box. Then they become, from mere claimants of what they want, judges of what they should get; and politics and industry become mingled up in a way that is injurious to both.

As a matter of fact, we all get less wages than we want and think right. This has been partly owing to the injustice of men; but the root difficulty is the Decree of Providence, alluded to in Genesis, ch. iii. verses 17, 18, and 19. Young sparsely-peopled lands do not feel this at first, but if the

whole of the wage fund available, say, in England were to be divided among those in employment and wanting employment, from the Lord Chancellor downwards, it would only give a miserable pittance to each. When laws are made fixing wages for certain classes (that all would allow to be right, if we can pay them) which are above what the natural productiveness of the work would return, the difference must be paid, in one form or another, by those who are outside the protected circle.

Here was the problem. At the same time, the discussions at the meeting and the conference with Secker Secretary suggested some correcting influences to excesses. One was the difficulty of uniting the whole army of State workers upon the demands that were to be insisted on. There were natural divisions among them even, as in the rest of the Social State; also there were many men in their ranks who were actuated by a sense of public duty and were ready to make sacrifices for it. The other was in that great hope of all free institutions and all progress—the general public opinion of the country. If a sufficiently large mass of the people could be kept independent of Government employment, there would always be an outside judgment, not directly interested, to appeal to. But there was no denying that the more the sphere of politics extended over industry, the more the general Government and the general weal of the people became subordinated to the domination of the State's army of employees. If the ideal of Socialism—the State, or popular bodies under it, carrying on all industry—were realised, Government by universal suffrage would become impossible. The parts would become greater than the whole.

'Long talk, then, with Secker Secretary? Hope all went straight—free and easy to come and go a bit,' remarked Quiggle. 'Deep one Secker, dear sir. What he don't know, you needn't go up for examination in. He knows, bless you! what's what, who's who, why's why, where's where, and especially when's when. Yes, that does Norrie Secker, Esq., General Secretary, etc. etc. You are tired a bit over it, Mr. Frankfort, I can observe that,' continued the cheerful agent.

'Yes, I am a bit tired. What Mr. Secker said requires

considering. Several points want thinking over. And then he claims to be such a power, with all those votes behind him. It is like arguing with the master of big battalions.'

'Well, well,' said Quiggle good-naturedly, 'if you want to spell a bit give old Karl Brumm a turn. You ought to see him, and he'll do all the talking and you have only to listen. Some won't even do that, but you will; he will interest you, I guess he will.'

'Why, who is Karl Brumm?'

'Karl? Karl Brumm? He's our hotch-hotch philosopher—that's what Hedger, the lawyer, calls him, as he says that he contains a lot of valuable assets, but all mixed up together. Yes, you ought to see him. He will do all the talking; and then, you know, he has a deal—a great deal, mind you—to do with the German vote; though he himself has been so long from Fatherland, as he calls it, that he has almost lost the accent.'

'What are the valuable assets, then?' asked our politician. 'Ideas, information, principles?'

'All rolled up together,' replied Quiggle, 'and worth listening to, too; though, you know, he is such an original—funny, not to say queer—a point or two off in some things, but full of ideas, only the parcels come out upside down, so oddly. I can't make him quite out myself. Sometimes I'm inclined to laugh a bit. He says that in Germany, as a young fellow, he worshipped Karl Marx—and that he does so still, with variations. Has new and original theories for everything—only asks for people to listen to them. If you'll only do that, out they will come, one after the other, like sausages out of Maley's machine down the street there.'

'I suppose he is a scholar, then, is Mr. Brumm?'

'Certainly he is, in his own way. He'll give you something to digest too, will Karl. He talks, and his Helsa, Mrs. Brumm, and the parrots look on. They live in their little cottage in the wood, about a mile from Upper End. The place looks lonely; but, bless you! they ain't lonely. The fowl paddock alone is a sight, one of the best in the district—and the parrots. He is full of his theories and she of her parrots, and there is nothing more welcome to

all three than a visitor, to listen to both theories and screeching, as I may remark. You needn't say nothing; you needn't think nothing, if you don't like,' said the agent, winding up his account of the Bush philosopher with a laugh. 'Easier than tackling Secker Secretary,' he murmured, half to himself.

As he was rattling on, our politician felt his interest in the German was rather aroused by Quiggle's description, so it ended in the two going that afternoon to Upper End Station on a goods train, by the special permit of Hiram Brickwood. But before he went, our politician did not forget to write to town about the M'Glumpy absurdity. He thought it best to send a private note to the Postmaster-General, as it was really a foolish sort of thing to put in a formal official correspondence; and besides, writing at once to the head of the Department, the thing could be stopped from going through. That official received it a couple of days after, when he next attended at the Post Office (his duties being divided between that Department and the Bureau of Education and Public Knowledge, of which he was also Minister), and soon forgot all about it, it being such a small matter. It so fell out, therefore, that the appointment having been already passed with a large batch of other minor nominations, it never came before the Minister again, and M'Glumpy junior was, in fact, duly installed as letter-carrier at Glooscap by the Postmistress, and used to clean out the shop for her and deliver letters occasionally as she directed him.

It was still early in the afternoon when they arrived at Upper End. The walk from the train through the forest to the cottage was a short one, and they were soon there. It was small, but bright-looking and scrupulously neat and clean, and did seem, at first view, lonely, buried quite among the trees. But when you got near, a scene of busy life presented itself in the poultry paddock that Quiggle had referred to.

This consisted of about three acres in front of the cottage, leased on easy terms from the Government, in one-half of which Mrs. Brumm's fowl disported themselves, and carried on their daily life, to serve, unknown to them, the

purposes of man. The warm, light, dry soil, the convenient trees for shade and shelter, the clumps of bushes to cover nests, the clear, full pond, the fresh sand patches provided by that lady's care, and the snug fowl-house for the night (daily cleaned out by Mr. Brumm himself), all made it quite an ideal home for poultry. And here they were, in all their varied kinds, dense Conservatives, in fact, old Tory fowl, disporting themselves in this new world in their several ways, but all in strict accordance with the fowl precedents of ancient days and other lands. There was the turkey-cock still going on in the old absurd way, turning round and round, inflating his comb, repeating his gobble-gobble exclamation, and puffing out his plumage in a desperate style, as if making a last effort to attract public notice, and no one heeding him, except his own meek hens, even if *they* do ; for, from the quiet wearied way in which they look on, it seems as if it was quite a question with them whether the thing was not carried too far, and overdone. And there the domestic hen, seeking anxiously still her safe, secret place wherein to lay the daily egg, impelled solely by her provident care to have a full nest to hatch at the proper time, but all the while really providing for the wants of egg-devouring man. Joyfully she proclaims with loud cackle her new-laid one, as the chief event of her day, but she is, in fact, only announcing another morsel for his breakfast-table. There also the fretful failure of a mother, with her one or two lonely-looking chickens following her about, and she all the time scraping and pecking and quarrelling and exclaiming as if she had a big brood on her mind ; while the successful hen of the world sails easily along, attended by her dozen chicks, readily providing for them all by a few well-directed scratches, given in a triumphant manner on the right spot, that is fertile with insects suitable for the young. The little ducklings are there, all so new and as yet clean-looking in their soft downy yellow, the heart of the mother hen distracted with fears in this hemisphere as in the other, when her alien children paddle away from her in the pond ; and all the while the knowing old ducks sailing philosophically about, as if quite content that the stranger should have the worry of bringing up the

troublesome youngsters. The juvenile cocks, too, were to be seen, still filled with the old insane desire to have every now and then casual, but apparently desperate, sets-to one with another; each suddenly stopping and eyeing the adversary with deadly intent, then making one or two spasmodic darts each at the enemy's comb, and finally flitting aside to the peaceful hens, just as if it had on the moment occurred to them that cock-fighting was a mistake. Nor was there wanting the cock that will (flapping his wings to strengthen himself for each fresh effort) always keep crowing the same crow, at regular intervals, but in a manner that is sadly monotonous to every one but, apparently, to himself; though what he wants to say, and why he does not get tired of repeating it so often, remains as much a mystery in Excelsior as it is in Europe. Here too was plain evidence that change of climate did not modify the unamiable traits in fowl character. Still the poor unfortunate that by some early ill-luck got marked by a scar was pecked at and hunted by all the rest, as being disreputable and not fit for good society; the public opinion of the poultry world evidently not only disregarding the English principle, not to hit a man when he is down, but unanimously holding the very contrary, and one and all agreeing that you should peck a bird that is unfortunate. Generally also through the little mob of fowl were to be seen sundry birds, young and old, who were evidently bent on picking quarrels promiscuously with their neighbours,—exclaiming violently against them, chasing one for a moment and then desisting, only to turn at some one else, darting at the food in their comrade's mouth, though the heap was there to pick from themselves, getting in the quiet ones' way and obstructing them, and on the whole doing all they could to make themselves disagreeable and to needlessly add to the troubles of life. One-half of the paddock, that devoted to fowl generally, owned the sway of Mrs. Brumm; but the other, which was nearer the cottage and just before the little flower-plot in front, was set apart for the use of a fine flock of geese, in which the old German himself took an especial interest, having a high opinion of geese generally, and priding himself upon the breed of his birds as being

something remarkable. He used to say that President Hayes, of the United States, was a very sensible man. He had kept a poultry farm, on retiring from the kingship of sixty millions of people.

As our two travellers came near, the hissing of the disturbed geese and the screeching of several parrots, who were perched in cages or on stands about the verandah, made known to Mr. Brumm the arrival of strangers, and soon he was at the door, advancing to meet them. His appearance was the signal for a general rising among the fowl, geese, and parrots, testified by renewed screechings, hissings, chuckling, and agitation, and a universal flocking together in the poultry part of the paddock, as if they all believed, or made believe, that feeding time was come again prematurely. Our politician beheld a man of nearly seventy, hale and venerable, but presenting a somewhat wearied aspect, as if, though still strong bodily, he was getting mentally tired of the many problems and perplexities that life presents. He had that broad, expansive forehead which at times is to be seen in very ordinary men, which bespeaks indeed intelligence, but intelligence of a diffused rather than a concentrated description, and his large mild eyes, as they looked kindly but wearily around, told of a sensitive and sympathetic nature. Judging from his appearance, you would say that, while Nature, in mixing the ingredients for making Karl Brumm, might have missed in forming a genius, she had fully succeeded in furnishing forth a philanthropist.

‘Good day to you, Mr. Karl. You are quite well, I see; and I hope Mrs. Helsa is well too? Here is our new Member, Mr. Frankfort, or rather I should say Professor Frankfort—in fact, one philosopher coming to see another. I am only like the little wire that connects two of those highly-charged—what d’ye call them—things together. Ha, ha! so I am indeed,’ gently laughed the little agent.

‘Come in—come in, Mr. Frankfort. I thought, from the extra noise the geese were making, that something unusual was coming. Helsa, dear, this is our Parliamentary Deputy—or Representative, I should say. You know Mr. Louis Quiggle of time before.’ And a stout German lady, of over

sixty, stopped for a moment from the cleaning of a parrot's cage to give a kindly recognition to the visitors. In one corner of the small and cosy-looking room was an ancient spinning-wheel, and on an old table near it a German Bible and a book of Luther's Hymns, which comprised her literature; while a small bookshelf over the mantelpiece contained that of her husband. The names on the backs of these books soon caught Frankfort's eye—Karl Marx, Henry George, Fabian Tracts, among the foremost. Goethe's *Faust*, one volume of Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* (from Woodall's Lending Library in Brassville), one or two of Scott's novels, an ancient edition of Burns's poems, and a few unbound copies of Reviews which contained articles that had struck the old German as being of special value—these, with such current literature as he could afford, made up his library. The furniture about the little room was old, but well-preserved and comfortable-looking; and as the pure, peaceful ray of the afternoon sun shot into the quiet scene, it seemed to come to rest in congenial surroundings.

'I made a point of bringing our Member to you, Mr. Karl, as you took the trouble to come in and vote. And you vote straight. He votes straight, does he not, Mrs. Helsa?' rattled on the agent, turning, with a pleasant look, to the wife. 'But now I'll away and leave you two learned gentlemen together, while I go and look up our friends beyond in the Forest. I'll tell them, Mr. Frankfort, to call at the Lake Reservoir when they are in at the cattle sale to-morrow; and, if you please, sir, we'll meet at Upper End Station, evening train, 7.15 o'clock, Government time. Your humble servant, Mrs. Helsa, and yours obediently, Mr. Karl. By-by'; and, with an affectionate wave of the hand, the little man was off, to 'look up,' as he had said, the electors in the Forest.

'Pleasant quiet place you have here, Mr. Brumm. You don't feel it at all lonely, do you, you and your good wife here?' remarked Frankfort.

'No, I can't say that we do,—do we, Helsa? You see we have such good watchers about us.'

'Dogs?'

'No, geese. I used to have dogs, but they are stupid

things compared with geese. Parrots are very good watchers for the day, but they, like the dogs, go asleep at night—geese never, but, at the slightest approach, night or day, hissing and quacking they warn you. You are a scholar, sir. You remember how in old Rome the insidious advance on the Capitoline Hill was frustrated by the cackling of the geese.'

'To be sure that is so, Mr. Brumm. Well, I am glad I have come out to see you and acknowledge the trouble you took in coming in to vote.'

'Thank you,' replied Karl Brumm, looking round calmly; 'it is fair that I should tell you that I voted for Mr. Meeks.'

'Indeed,—that is a little disappointing to me. But no doubt you had good reason, Mr. Brumm.'

'Yes, I had. Mr. Meeks quite agrees with me on the great foundation question of our time—the land. I could not desert him.'

'Certainly not,' replied our politician, speaking quite sincerely, 'if he is the best exponent of your views. But what, may I ask, is the particular phase of the land question that you refer to?'

'Why, mine friend, the simple question: Whether the people are to be robbed of their inalienable ownership of the earth by what is called private property in land. If it is right for a man to own one acre, it is equally right that he should own the whole earth. And what, then, do the people of the earth become? His slaves.'

'Would you then lay hands on all landed property and confiscate it? That would soon kill industry and thrift too.'

'Mine friend, what is thrift? The gospel of sordid endeavour. Still, I would not seize the land from those they call its owners. By no means. Simply tax away the value to the State. Is not that simple?'

'Certainly, Henry George's idea.'

'Mine friend, mine friend,' said the old man, with a patient yet half-reproachful air—'mine friend, where have you learnt your philosophy? Helsa, my love, hand me the Bible.' And taking the old German volume, he turned to Leviticus, ch. xxv., and solemnly read, translating as he did so: 'If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away

some of his possession . . . then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of Jubilee : and in the Jubilee it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.'

'At the Jubilee, you see,' he continued, looking with a pleased, triumphant air at our politician—'at the Jubilee all was restored. No lasting property in land. Henry George—interesting writer—but only the Mosaic bellman for the nineteenth century. When will our Jubilee arrive?'

'Certainly the laws of Moses qualify our ideas of absolute property,' said our politician.

'Surely, surely. You may go into thy neighbour's vineyard and eat thy fill. You may go into his standing corn and pluck what you want. You must leave the sheaf in the field for the widow.'

'Still, it does seem hard that a man's land should be taken. Why not, then, his other savings?' asked our politician, who felt interested in learning how far the old German carried his liberal views.

'Other savings? Certainly. Why not? It is unjust accumulation that is the cause of poverty. Let me render to you again the words of the wise Book: "If thy brother be waxen poor, then thou shalt relieve him. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase." You respect the Bible, do you not, Professor?'

'Certainly. But what application do you draw from the last passage?'

'Is it not clear, good friend? It points to the Wealth Balance Tax. The Single Tax for land. The Wealth Tax for other accumulations, only not so absolute in its operation, owing to the difference between land and other property.'

'I am not sure,' remarked our politician, 'that I understand the proposed operation of this Wealth Tax.'

'What? not know the Wealth Balance Tax, and you a Professor?' said the old man, looking round with a gentle smile. 'Why, every year, upon the appointed day, each man counts up his assets and his liabilities. The balance of his assets over his liabilities is his wealth, I suppose. On this balance he pays the tax—some trifle, a penny or a half-

penny in the pound. It is levied on all, no one escapes. One man pays a few coppers, another a few pounds. The poor man who has no balance pays nothing. The result in our Province would be the addition of a million or so to the Revenue. No one feels it. It is paid out of superfluity. The value of the real and personal property in Excelsior is valued at £500,000,000, I believe. Well, suppose only a tax of a halfpenny in the pound. How much do five hundred millions of halfpence come to? But men are so simple,' continued the old German contemplatively, 'truly an "unco" squad," as your Robbie Burns has it. Able to see few things in their true light. Look at this cry about keeping up the gold currency of the Province.'

'Why, don't you approve of the gold standard, then?' asked our politician, rather surmising that Karl Brumm's ideas on that intricate subject would be independent of conventionalism.

'Gold standard, my good friend, why trouble about it? Have we not silver more than we know what to do with, and plenty of paper too, I suppose? What more do we want for a currency? the silver for small, the paper for large transactions.'

'Yet neither the silver nor the paper will do for exchange outside the Province. What is behind your paper, if you cannot get gold on demand?'

'What is behind? Well, I can't help smiling;—you will excuse me, I know. I will tell you, Mr. Professor, what is behind. At the back of every State note is the land, mines, rivers, public works, accumulated wealth, public spirit, intelligence, enterprise, and patriotism of the Province of Excelsior, and of the three million people who inhabit it. Possibly that is sufficient security for one pound,' and Karl Brumm looked round in calm triumph.

'I should just like to get it,' quietly remarked Helsa Brumm, as she scoured away actively at the floor of a cage that she had just taken down—'I should just like to get it for the pound that I have to spend on market day.'

She was, unlike some wives, and some very good wives too, an implicit believer in her husband; and, following his example, rather pitied any one who dissented from his various

theories. The parrot which she had a moment before put upon a high perch, while his cage was being cleaned, gave a loud screech, as his master looked round, just as if he understood and quite approved his views upon the Currency question, and he nodded as if to add his emphatic assent to Mrs. Brumm's remarks.

'No, no, mine friend, I have no difficulty about what is behind our paper, so long as we keep our silver in the country. If we go on letting all the silver go out of the country away to Europe, that is quite another thing. There may be difficulty then.'

'But surely, Mr. Brumm, we must send our silver to Europe if we are to get from Europe what we want.'

'Easy, Mr. Frankfort—easy, if you please. Slow and sure. The pressing want of the people of Excelsior is to get what they need from one another. I require certain simple but very necessary things from the baker, the butcher, the grocer at Upper End. If I have enough silver I can get all these. If I have not, what good to me is the silver going to Europe? No, my good sir. Step by step. First supply our own wants. For that purpose, keep the silver in the Province. I may inform you,' continued the old man, taking a well-worn notebook out of the desk near him—'I may inform you that when I went to Miranda with our Free Silver deputation, we saw both the Premier, the Honourable Mr. Brereton, and Sir Donald MacLever, the leader of the Opposition, and explained our views fully to them. I was one of the speakers.'

'Indeed! and what did they say? Did they agree with one another?'

'Well, it so happened that they rather did. Why, here I have written down their replies in my book. The Honourable the Premier remarks that "he regarded our views with a feeling of respect, joined to a spirit of inquiry."' And old Karl looked up at our politician to see what effect this ministerial declaration made upon him. 'Then Sir Donald MacLever—you know what a grave-looking man he is; these very honest men generally do look grave, do they not?'

'Sometimes they do. And what did he say?'

‘Why, here it is: “He did not hesitate to say that their opinions excite sympathy and challenge thought.” How great is truth, even among the mere children of the world!’ continued Karl Brumm, turning his benevolent look on his companion. ‘But, as I said just now,’ he continued, justifying Quiggle’s statement that he would carry on the conversation—‘as I said just now, men are so simple. They are humbugged whether in pleasure or in business. They go to a flower show; each individual is bored to death, but the general effect is pleasing. They call it pleasure. They are bid go fishing to the grand trout streams beyond Silver-acre; and when they get there they are told that the real trout are somewhere else—further on, of course. Or turn to business: look at our Trams and Rails.’

‘Yes, there is something wrong there, certainly—crushing loss.’

‘But why, mine friend? only because of their absurd management.’

‘And which do you consider the really weak point in the management, Mr. Brumm?’

‘The absurd Ticket system. They should be free to travel on for all—free as the air.’

‘Free as the air;—but surely,—why, what, how would you maintain them?’

‘By the public purse, of course. The people’s money would pay for the people’s conveyance. No one would travel unless he had business to do, or goods to deliver, and look what an impetus the free carriage would give to industry everywhere. It would be new life to it, and to the Province. If you keep a buggy you do not pay every time you go in it, do you?’

‘It would be a rather heavy burden to the Revenue, though,’ suggested our politician.

‘Not so much as you might imagine. Just consider what an army of porters, gatekeepers, ticket collectors, detectives, complicated book-keeping, clerical supervision, time and labour in arranging tables of fares and concessions, not to mention printing and stationery, would be saved. The spurt given to industry by free interchange would alone pay for the loss. It is not because ideas are new that they

are to be despised,' said the old man, looking round and uttering a gentle passing reproach to the parrot, which still kept screeching, apparently as if he wanted to join in the conversation, but really because his cage was being washed.

'If,' he continued, 'we were not to accept novelties, where would be progress? We progress, indeed, by taking up absurd things and making them practicable afterwards. For example, Woman's Suffrage was once laughed at—but now!'

'Now its ultimate success is assured, I am glad to feel,' remarked our politician.

'So I should hope by what I hear. But, mine good friend, as well as I can understand, you political men have missed, I fear, the most important part of Woman's Rights.'

'In what way, Mr. Brumm? We are, most of us, for giving every woman a vote. What more can we do?'

'It is just as I thought. You have missed the great point. I was about observing when you spoke, that you and your friends quite overlook the obvious fact that if every woman is entitled to one vote, the woman who is also a mother is entitled to two. She has performed a service—perhaps at the risk of her life—which is not only useful to the community, but essential to its existence. The other has not. Is she to get nothing for this from the State that she builds up, and for which she produces the men that are to fight its battles?'

'And the unmarried women to have only one vote?'

'Why should they have more? Have they produced men for their country? Have they risked their lives in so doing? Mine good friend, we must look to reason in what we do, not mere habit and custom. Else we are like a shoal of minnows all darting for our very lives into the boy's net simply because the biggest minnow, and perhaps the biggest fool of all, has darted that way first. Let us think for ourselves,' he added, as he was challenged again by the parrot that Mrs. Brumm had just put into his cleaned cage, and who was screeching frightfully in consequence.

'Well, that certainly is a new view, Mr. Brumm. In all the Press advocacy of Woman's Rights, I don't think I ever saw this idea of yours before.'

'The Press—the Press,' returned the old man, still gazing on his parrot. 'What *is* the Press?'

'With all its defects, it is an agent of enlightenment and a guardian against wrongs, both public and private.'

'Well, mine friend, I suppose you politicians must say as much. But I should like to ask you—I suppose you are aware that the London news-agents' list of leading newspapers of the world fills a book of eighty pages, each page enumerating fifty newspapers. The smaller papers you would count by the thousand. How many of them give us facts, true facts for our news? How many?'

'I should say that many of them do—as well as they can at least,' remarked our politician.

'Then I am sorry that I cannot agree with you. When do you find the simplest fact truly stated? In your country, Britain, when Universal Suffrage was adopted, how many of your newspapers stated the fact?'

'Surely they all called attention to the enlargement of the Franchise.'

'Not at all, Professor. Universal Suffrage in England was conferred by the Poor Rate Assessment and Collection Bill in 1878, and none of all your newspapers mentioned that great event. It was our German papers that first called attention to it. I learnt it from the *Hanoversches Tageblatt* there on the table. It is from my native district. Woodall gets it for me. It is the only paper worth an intelligent man's time to read. As for the rest, if I wanted instruction in human affairs, I would as soon refer to the Government Astronomer's Report on Astrophotographic Researches'; and he handed Frankfort the document from a bundle of Parliamentary papers, that were issued by the Government Astronomer and dealt with scientific subjects.

'I see, then, that you take an interest in other than political topics.'

'Truly I do, mine friend. Your predecessor, Meeks, understood this, and took a deep interest in following these subjects with me. He sent me these scientific papers regularly, and used then to get my opinion on them, which, he used to find, was of great assistance to him in dealing with

the subjects in Parliament. I shall be happy to render you a similar service if you desire it.'

'Certainly I do,' replied our politician. 'I shall be glad to send you all publications of that kind. And as you are interested in the Currency question, I can send you any papers upon that too. Quiggle tells me that you favour the decimal system?'

'What intelligent man does not? Only there, too, people will miss the point. The true unit obviously is one-twelfth, not one-tenth. It should be a duodecimal system. You can take an even quarter, half, or three-fourths of twelve, but can you of ten? Yet people do not notice these simple fundamental things. We do not make haste to be wise, do we?' he asked, as he looked round with a smile. 'It's just the same with our silly method of issuing warrants to arrest criminals.'

'Why, would you not have warrants before men are arrested?' inquired Frankfort.

'Certainly not? Why should you, mine friend? You think a man has committed a burglary. You send out an officer with a warrant to arrest him. You have to pay the officer highly, and probably you have the man on your hands to support for years. Serve a summons upon him to appear in court that day week, and, why,' continued Karl Brumm, with his accustomed look of mild triumph—'why, you never hear of him again. He flies the country. Follow that common-sense course, and you will soon have no need of either warrant or summons in Excelsior. Then you can do without officers, and I presume that you do not absolutely want criminals.'

The conversation was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain, as Mrs. Brumm was bringing in the parrots from the verandah for the night, and they insisted on screeching and nodding to one another, as if they too had knotty points that must be disputed over and solved before they settled to rest. So our politician rose to take his farewell of the old philosopher—for he was a lover of wisdom at least, as he knew it—and his good wife.

'Though Mr. Meeks has been my man, I truly wish you all success in your Parliamentary life, Mr. Frankfort. Only

remember one thing, or you will be disappointed, mine good friend, in your future work !'

'What is that, Mr. Brumm?'

'Why, that the institution that you are about to become a member of—Parliament—never accomplishes the object it intends in making laws ; but always some other object that it did not intend.'

'Well, really Mr. Brumm, I think you state your proposition in rather a broad way. At times it is, no doubt, as you say.'

'Always, mine friend, always—in the simplest things as in the greatest. But particularly when you make laws to help the poor man, somebody else generally reaps the crop.'

'Oh well, Mr. Brumm, mistakes will be made under any system. It is something to at least aim at helping the poor man.'

'Surely, surely,' slowly repeated Karl, as our politician, taking a kind farewell of the two old people, hurried off to join Quiggle at Upper End and catch the evening train to Brassville.

As he walked along the Forest track, he could not but reflect how all-pervading and penetrating are the new ideas of our time. There—in that distant, lonely cottage, which the passing traveller would conclude sheltered only some country folk, whose talk was of bullocks—even there were the problems of social life cogitated over, and if at times perverted and misunderstood, yet attempted to be grappled with, and all in the interest of the many and of the poor. Just as Madame Dole had her views about Woman's Suffrage at her mountain shanty, so Karl Brumm had his here in the woods ; and thousands like him, all over the globe, were thinking more or less, certainly arguing, theorising and disputing theories, spinning out devices of the brain to cope with the evil conditions of life. Thinking has become democratised. It used to be the privilege of the few, now it is the recreation of the many. In the multitude of counsellors there is said to be safety. If our civilisation fails, it will not be for want of advice.

Our politician would not have been sorry to have spent some more time discussing public topics with his con-

stituents, and listening to their opinions, for it is always instructive to know what a number of people do think ; but his duties at the University were awaiting him, and though Mr. Dorland, as President of the Board of Overseers, gave instructions for arrangements to be made for any leave that Professor Frankfort might desire, our politician did not feel it right to act upon this generous consideration too freely. Besides, the political atmosphere in Excelsior was beginning to get electrical with the conditions that naturally attended the approaching meeting of Parliament. So he had one or two more interviews with prominent constituents, and completed the settling of his election accounts, with the aid and advice of Louis Quiggle. He spent a happy evening the day before he left with his uncle and aunt and the cousins at the Bank ; but no reference was made by either nephew or uncle to the interview in the Bank parlour on the day of his first election meeting. By tacit mutual consent that skeleton was put away in a back closet of the memory ; never, let us hope, to come forth again. No reference to the Reservoir was made by either of the men. But Mrs. Fairlie lamented its loss for the present as too sad, and a cruel blow to them all ; and young Teddy kept asking when it *would* be ready for his boats.

The only other social engagement that our politician had to fulfil was to lunch with Mrs. Quiggle. Though he was very much pressed with business on the last day of his stay—he was going by the afternoon train—Mr. Quiggle informed him that he would have to come, as Mrs. Quiggle had decided that he must have his farewell lunch with her. The little man said that he had, in fact, suggested to her to forego her undoubted claim, in consideration of the many calls of duty upon the Member on the last day of his stay. But she would admit of no excuse ; her mind was made up, and as the agent remarked, putting forth his hands in a deprecating manner, when that was so it was a case of ‘there you are.’ So he drove Frankfort out in his own trap, and the two presented themselves to Mrs. Quiggle precisely at the hour that she had named. She was as large for a woman as he was small for a man, in accordance with Nature’s instinct which generally incites the fancy of the two

sexes in this manner, else the human race would develop into tribes of giants on the one hand and dwarfs on the other. She was in figure altogether sufficiently matronly to have been his mother, but her youthful and pleasing appearance justified their marital relation. It was evident that she ruled her husband, but she did it as good intelligent wives do, kindly as well as firmly. One token of her effective training at once struck our politician as novel, but full of significance, and that was not only the respectful but laudatory manner in which Quiggle kept on during the lunch referring to each dish of the fare—nathless that it was at his own table—in fact, as if he were only a guest himself, and she the real authority, which indeed she was. The case of the husband who grumbles at his food was quite reversed here; and it all came out so naturally, that it was evidently the little man's daily habit. It had become almost with him, as Secker wished the promotion of the State workers to be, automatic.

‘Loui, what will you have?’ she asked, after giving our politician a wing of a chicken reared and fattened by herself, as she informed him.

‘Why, my dear, either a leg or wing of that delicious chicken. Leg or wing is all one with a bird like that. Not like those chicken frames that one sees in Hegarty’s provision store down the street. Professor, I would recommend you to try one of these artichokes. They are from Mrs. Quiggle’s own garden. These are the true vegetable, you understand—succulent for a baby; not like pieces of boiled paper smothered in butter. Take a piece of toast, Mr. Frankfort. If there is one thing that Mrs. Quiggle understands, it is toast. I think I may say that she knows the difference between a piece of board and a piece of toast. This is toast, you see—crisp yet tender.’

‘Loui, will you have pie or shape?’ the lady asked, when the feast had reached that stage.

‘Some of that lovely shape, my love. Why, this,’ he continued, striking his spoon into his portion—‘this is the sort of thing that they give to Royal personages when they are convalescent from illness. I shouldn’t wonder if that Prince La Tour d’Auvergne, who, the cable says, broke

his leg hunting the other day, lives on things just like this.'

'Orange or pineapple, Loui?'

'It's hard, really, to choose between fruit like that; but, if I must, I will say the orange.'

So he kept on chattering away very much to himself, while Mrs. Quiggle and her visitor talked about various incidents of the election, and about Woman's Rights, which the good lady strongly supported. But she had a view of her own upon that subject, like most others. For she maintained that only married women were entitled to the Franchise.

'What a single woman wants is not a vote, but a husband. She ain't a real woman if she is satisfied with a vote,' she remarked. Our politician tried to combat this view as a low one of womankind, but he was overruled as firmly as Quiggle himself would have been if he had ventured to differ from his wife. Mrs. Quiggle not only held her ground, but maintained that a woman never properly settled down to the work of life till she was married, and did not hesitate to name Miss Gazelle as an instance of this. It was in vain that Frankfort urged that the greatest heroines in the world's history and the greatest benefactors of the race have been single women. Mrs. Quiggle continued her remarks on Miss Gazelle, and spoke slightly of that lady's political activity, said that 'she was too much all of a flutter about politics, like a quarrelsome hen,' and asked why she didn't come to the point with Seth Pride, and then when the two had settled down, they could put a little sense into things. After lunch, as our politician and Mrs. Quiggle were getting quite earnest in the controversy, and the afternoon was meanwhile slipping away, Quiggle interposed a warning, remarking that time would not wait even for empresses; and so after the farewell with Mrs. Quiggle, who wished him equal good luck at all future elections, he and Quiggle drove off to the station. Here they parted with a mutual appreciation of the respective merits of one another. Frankfort felt grateful for the zealous and skilful services of his agent. On the other hand, Quiggle, while he realised all the inexperience of our politician, expected that he would shape

well enough after an election or two, and when he had become accustomed to trot in the political harness.

As the train puffed slowly out of the station, the eye of our politician was caught directly—his own name seemed strange to him in the new surroundings—by the election posters, proclaiming the identity of his cause with that of Water and the Reservoir, which had startled him when he was arriving to begin his canvass. Some had been blown down, and more torn or defaced by the enemy ; but others remained flaunting still, though in a faded manner, their watchwords to the now indifferent public. He fancied them less than ever now, just as a man regards the exaggeration of after-dinner deliverances when he reads them in cold print the next morning. They seemed so forlorn there, like worn-out beauties that no one would notice now.

When the train arrived at Great Gorge, Frankfort found some confusion pervading the station. It appeared that the down train to Brassville was stopped there for want of the staff to enable it to proceed on its journey. What had happened to the staff was not clear. The only thing known was that, owing to some mishap, it was now at Little Gorge Station, ten miles distant on the line to Brassville, and, until it could be sent for, the down train must remain at Great Gorge. Going through the crowd on the platform, which was partly composed of his new constituents, among the first he met were his two friends from The Blocks, the Honourable Mrs. Lamborn and her daughter, Miss Lamborn. They had unexpectedly prolonged their stay in town and were now returning home. Both upon public and private considerations, the least that our politician could do was to devote himself to their service during this provoking stoppage, and until he could see them safely in the train for Brassville under Hiram Brickwood's charge. He found this new phase of electioneering by no means as irksome as some of those which he had lately passed through.

Soon the two ladies and our politician were seated at the table in the spacious dining saloon, consoling themselves partly with Great Gorge refreshments, but chiefly with the pleasure of mutual conversation. For what is the recruiting of bodily wants compared to the pleasing flow

of soul between two interesting women and a man who is bent upon making himself agreeable to them? Mrs. Lamborn comprehensively, though in her languid way, condemned the stoppage of the train, in all its aspects. It was so unpleasant and disappointing bringing people home to Brassville late for the eight o'clock dinner, and keeping Mr. Lamborn waiting for them. And he would be quite nervous about them too. Frankfort could only sympathise, and inquire how they had enjoyed themselves during their stay in the capital. It seemed that, owing to the arrival of some distinguished visitors from Europe, who were supposed to be connected with the aristocracy, a sort of early or premature season had broken out in society in Miranda. As a fact, the fashionable world was not quite clear who the notable strangers were; but though only two of them could boast of titles (and these, it was whispered, of but recent creation), and one was actually named Smith (still he was Haliburton Smith, and was understood to be connected with the Haliburtons), yet it was generally agreed that there was something uncommon about the visitors, and they were received by the local aristocracy with a greater fervour of hospitality than it was their custom to display to one another in their mutual intercourse. Accordingly, the number of dances, theatre parties, race and polo meetings, four-in-hand developments, picnics, ping-pong evenings, and revels generally was prodigious. In fact, the common business of life in the Province could not have gone on were it not that these dissipations were confined to the upper circle, and plain people were left to continue earning their daily bread as before.

But Mrs. and Miss Lamborn, as belonging to the territorial aristocracy, could not get away from their natural engagements. Indeed, Mrs. Lamborn had written to Mr. Lamborn to come to town, so as to be able to accompany them to the more important functions; but, as he was busy with the shearing, and the wool was not turning out very well, he had to deny himself that pleasure, and replied to her letter, wishing her and Eilly 'a good time,' and hoping that they would get away and come back to him as soon as they properly could.

‘No wonder, then, that you did not come back as soon as you intended, with all this fun going on,’ remarked Frankfort.

‘Oh! we did enjoy ourselves so, Mr. Frankfort,’ returned Miss Lamborn. ‘And we were not so bad as you might think. We went to church on Sunday, and heard the great Mr. Brookfield himself.’

‘Yes; and the choir is so well trained, you know. Lord Kilgour himself told me that the singing was nearly as good as in his own cathedral,’ remarked Mrs. Lamborn.

‘And, mother, was not the sermon fine? It was all about you and the other Members—the elections, you understand, that are just over.’

‘Indeed, and what did he say of us?’

‘Well, he has such a way of making you listen to him. I assure you, with all the people in the church, strangers and all, and the bonnets and hats too, I could not help attending to him. His text was “Honour the king.” I can tell you all he said. He put it in this sort of way,’ and Eilly Lamborn turned her honest, sincere look straight upon our politician—‘this is what he said. He described the good man in old times—the honest one, you see—he would honour the king then—no cringing or telling lies, or that sort of thing, but fair, open sort of “honest honour,” I think he called it; and he quoted something from Shakespeare that I forget; and then he went on, and next he made out that the people were now the king, and the biggest king of all, and no going against them or fighting them at all. He spoke about that, and then he went on that all you Members, at this election, should honour the king too, but not tell him lies, or cringe to him either, or that sort of thing; but give the honest honour, and worked it round in that kind of way. You see what I mean?’

‘Certainly I do, and a very good lesson it was.’

‘Oh yes, and I was almost forgetting. He said at the end—in such a solemn way, it made you feel solemn listening to him—that every one of you would now have to determine whether your object in life was to be useful or only to be popular.’

‘That is rather a serious question, is it not?’ said

Frankfort, his attention at the time, however, being chiefly engaged by the earnest, natural manner of the speaker.

'To be sure. And Mr. Brereton was there, and, coming out, he said to young Mr. Fooks—one of the strangers, the young American, you know, who has come here about some great American business company, who went with us, and a very pleasant young fellow, too; I rather took a fancy to him; Mr. Brereton said, out quite loud, in his odd sort of way "That sermon ought to be pasted up in the bedrooms of all the Members—over their beds." I could scarcely help laughing—it was such an odd thing to say—though I was coming out of church.'

'Well, now, that will do, Eilly; you always go on in such a way, talking about things. Mr. Frankfort has heard sermons before, I suppose, at the chapels in the colleges and places. You need not go over it all again, as if he had never heard a sermon in his life.'

'Mother dear,' said the daughter, with a bright laugh, and putting her hand in a deprecating way on her mother's arm, 'I only tell Mr. Frankfort all about it because I want to ask him a question.'

'A question, Miss Lamborn?'

'Yes,' she replied still looking at her mother. 'Whether he means to be useful or only to be popular?'

'Well, and, Eilly, why should you ask such sort of questions? I am quite surprised at you. Of course Mr. Frankfort will go in and work with the rest, just like your dear father, and fight them and push his way, and become a Minister, and make up his name and outdo Mr. What's-his-name—the Premier man—and perhaps get a title, like Lord Kilgour, in the end. What's the use of asking whether he will be popular or be useful? Of course he will be both, like your dear father. You do take things in such an odd way, Eilly. I never noticed these queer things in Mr. Brookfield's sermon.'

'Now, really, Mrs. Lamborn, I must say that Miss Lamborn has struck a note, so to speak——' But before our politician could get any further, the little party were roused from their discussion by the strong voice of Hiram Brickwood calling along the platform, 'All aboard, down train, Brass-

ville.' The staff had been secured, and the passengers were hurrying to their seats. Brickwood was so put out by the delay that he missed having a conversation that he intended with our politician upon affairs generally, and was only able to bid him the time of day, as he hurried to lock up his train, and to utter one ejaculation, which indeed seemed to take the form of an imprecation, about the failure of the loan and the loss of the Reservoir. But though a good deal ruffled, he showed Mrs. and Miss Lamborn into their compartment with a considerable amount of politeness, for he had the friendly feeling of citizenship for all the denizens, high and low, of Brassville, the town of his adoption.

'Be sure you come and see us when you are next in Brassville, Mr. Frankfort,' said Mrs. Lamborn, smiling kindly to him, though in her tired way.

'Certainly I will, and perhaps then we can finish our conversation about Mr. Brookfield's sermon.'

'Oh, very well, if you and Eilly enjoy talking about things like that. And Mr. Lamborn sometimes takes it into his head to talk that way, too—I think she gets it from him. He can tell you all about being useful and popular too, as he is.'

Hiram's whistle blew sharply, the steam puffed away, lost in the empty air, and the train moved off.

Not long after our politician was rolling away in the express for the city. That alternative for the politician, which Eilly Lamborn had reported Mr. Brookfield as so eloquently presenting, kept recurring to him. He could not help musing about it in that half-wandering way that people think over things as they rumble along in a railway carriage, with the continuity of thought impaired by the succession of new scenes and trivial events which distract attention. Was he then to seek to be popular or to be useful—to be successful for himself or beneficial to others? Why not both, as Mrs. Lamborn had remarked? She was a kind, good lady—a true woman—evidently had more common-sense than her daughter. Still, there was a ring about what the girl had said—to be sure she was only repeating Mr. Brookfield—that roused an answering note in his breast. Yet, certainly,

how different what he had seen of political life so far was from the ideal that he and the other young men—Chadwick, Myles Dillon, and the rest—used to conjure up in their walks in Scotland. That was, of course, a mere ideal, and Government in every age was far removed, in fact, from any ideal—certainly from any ideal of perfection. One thing, at least, was clear, that the whole conditions of public life were changing and going into new channels; no doubt improved channels, but, improving or deteriorating, certainly new. Was it not the same with all the other institutions of life? Politics was only one of them. Law, medicine, literature, business, even the religious calling, was continuously developing into something different from what they had been. Look at the military art, that played such an important part in human government. How would we fare now if we opposed cross-bows to rifles, or battering-rams to artillery? Why, one skilled rifleman of the present time at the siege of Troy, properly posted behind the Scaen Gate, would, with his rifle, have been more than a match for all the heroes of that day, including wide-ruling Agamemnon and swift-footed Achilles, or even man-slaughtering, gore-tainted Mars himself! Not all the spears and shields of the Greeks would have been a match for one little bullet from that weapon of modern times. Political methods and weapons were all changed too. But in whatever age one might find himself, and in whatever new conditions placed, a man's individuality always remained to himself.

Thus our politician sped along his journey, occupied with railway meditations, and mingling classical reminiscences with political reflections. The time seemed short to him when the whistle sounded as the train neared the central station at Miranda. Frankfort hurried to his bachelor home. He enjoyed mingling in the throng of the city, unknown and unquestioned; not a placard to challenge him with its cold mockery—nay, not a soul to sound the praises of the Reservoir. He enjoyed the success that he had achieved, and his entrance within that public life which, as a youth, he had contemplated from without. And he enjoyed, too, the return to his quiet rooms, the familiar bookshelves, con-

aining his silent though companionable friends, the books ; the few family portraits, reminding him of the old land and the old folk ; the homely furniture, the restful chair—plain though all was and unblessed by the companionship of woman.

CHAPTER VI

PARLIAMENT

FRANKFORT now turned his attention to what was congenial work to him—his Lectures on Sociology at the William Dorland University. Like Sir James Mackintosh and some other eminent politicians, he was now both a professor and a Member of Parliament. He found that the practical insight into political ways and popular ideas, and his experiences of even the less noble aspect of politics as met with in an election contest, were of use to him in his College duties, in enlarging his ideas, giving him insight into the working of affairs, and showing him how the ordinary man regards them, and thus throwing side-lights upon the social subjects that he was investigating. Gibbon and Macaulay wrote history in a more effective manner from having been in Parliament, and he, in his humbler sphere, was more successful in teaching the science of social life and economy owing to his having had to encounter and deal with the ideas and wants of all sorts of men, wise and simple, just and unjust. His lecture-room was well filled not only with students, but with some of the general public, who, under regulations which were sanctioned by the President, were admitted to the back seats. When he gave his opening address for the term, on 'The Precious Metals as Mediums of Industrial Exchange,' no less a person than the President himself was among the audience, and listened throughout with critical attention. Money and the currency is such a perplexing and misleading matter that one acute observer has dramatically exclaimed, 'Money, I curse thee!' and

certainly there are few social topics upon which mankind have been more misled.

Our lecturer got through his difficult subject well, and made most of those present understand how it was that gold had come to be generally accepted among mankind as the standard medium of exchange between nation and nation. The President, after the lecture, walked with him to his rooms, and complimented him on the able manner in which he had handled his subject. He was also anxious to know when the Professor would deal with the possibilities of Silver and the great subject of Bimetallism. For the President held the view that the world-wide depression in commercial affairs was wholly due to the ill-treatment of Silver as a medium of exchange. Soon he and the lecturer were deep in questions concerning the demonitisation of Silver, the ratio of Gold to Silver, the true value of the Gold standard, resolutions of the German Reichstag and State Council, the declarations of the French Government and the views of the United States in favour of international Bimetallism, the report of the Gold and Silver Commission in England, the best means of fixing a par of exchange between the precious metals, the relation of paper currency to coin, how a baser medium drives out a superior, and other questions of a like kind, as abstruse as those with which Milton describes the lost angels as perplexing themselves in vain in the infernal regions. The only thing left plain at the end of their discussion was that the President declared himself to be a firm friend to Silver.

‘Doing justice to Silver,’ said he, ‘is a national question, a university question, a world-wide question. We sink or swim with it.’

‘We will certainly sink with it if we take a wrong view of it,’ replied Frankfort.

‘What unpractical fellows these bookmen are! They don’t know what worldly wisdom is at all,’ thought the President to himself; but he only said as they parted, ‘Well, well, thanks for the lecture, anyway. We all have something to learn about the matter; we will have to face the question in a practical manner some day. It will come home to us in the University too.’

Our politician enjoyed the comparative rest that his University duties afforded, before he had to take his part in the exciting scenes of public life. But now the great political event of the year was approaching. The Legislature of Excelsior was about to assemble. We must not despise the experiences of our politician in the ways and methods of this small community. How much of the political ideas of the world have been derived from the city of Athens, with its twenty-one thousand free citizens exercising the political franchise? Indeed, it is only in small States that you can get to the source and true meaning of the peoples' ideas and analyse them. In a vast continent, such, for example, as the United States, with eighty millions of people, you certainly see an outcome of popular institutions, but you cannot trace the principles and ideas that actuate men, nor indeed can you truly say that the Government is directed by the individual opinions of its citizens. Individuality is lost in the crowd, freedom of voting in the discipline necessary to direct millions of votes. The practical issue arrived at is not the resultant of electors' personal opinions, but the outcome of the complex and artificial action of the Machine directed by the Boss. In the first contest between McKinley and Bryan there were 13,923,102 votes cast. Single electors or groups of electors are obviously out of place amid such vast operations. They must either march to the word of command as soldiers or become useless stragglers. In such a field, therefore, you can see the outcome of democratical principles, but not observe their source. If there had been fourteen million electors in ancient Greece we would not have had for our study the wisdom of Solon, the ascendancy of Pericles, or the popular arts of Cleon. These men, even Cleon included, would have been too original and independent to operate through the machine, and without it, though they could dominate a city, they could not spread their ideas and influence over a continent.

But in a small, young community, apart from the rest of the world, which is governed directly by the votes of the men and women inhabiting it, you can see just what these men and women do think and what they want to do. There is nothing to interfere with this expression of their wishes,

and little, in the early stage of their national life, to prevent them from giving effect to those wishes. Their Government is their servant in reality, not in theory only, as it is under the Boss and the Machine. They are the real sovereign, and none can succeed in their service unless by thinking their thoughts and doing their bidding. It is a new state of things, which can only exist in small communities, and in the infancy of a nation's life.

Much disappointment has been expressed at the results of popular Government. But in truth its critics commit the mistake of expecting from it a greater combination of merits—and of merits that are of a conflicting character—than falls to the lot of any human institution. And they overlook the fact that in respect to all forms of Government, the question with sensible men is, how much of what is faulty they should put up with—whether they live in the Republic of America or under the Autocracy of Russia. This is certainly no reason why defects should not be exposed and endeavours made to amend them. He is the best friend and the most loyal subject of any Government who endeavours to correct its abuses, and takes the first step towards that end by clearly stating what they are and bringing the light to bear upon them. But he can do all this and at the same time believe that the Government he criticises is, with all its faults, still one adapted to his country, and suited to the age in which we live.

Popular institutions suffer from too much having been promised in their name by those who heralded their advent. A disinterestedness and a lofty devotion to high principles was claimed for them which is not compatible with the everyday wants and feelings of men under any form of national life. They were also expected to combine the self-restraint of select Governments with the vigour and expansive power that comes with the inrush of numbers. Hence arose disappointment to some sincere friends of freedom. Washington, after a few years' experience of the Republic which he had founded, plaintively deplored to a friend the fact that they had expected too much from human nature. Mr. Gerry, one of the leading men of his time in America, says, speaking in 1789:

‘In Massachusetts the worst men get into Legislature. Men of indigence, ignorance, and baseness spare no pains, however dirty, to carry their point against men who are superior to the artifices practised.’

Such was not our politician's experience of the Legislators of Excelsior. They did not claim to be an aristocratic body, but they need not have feared comparison with aristocratic legislatures in qualities that are essential to the usefulness of parliaments to peoples. They were sincerely devoted to the interests of the masses; they truly wished to serve them, and they not only desired to relieve the wants and privations of the poor, but they felt a personal sympathy for the poor in their difficulties. They may have made mistakes at times in the means that they adopted, but their purpose to alleviate the ills of social life was constant, and their efforts to that end unceasing. And whatever imperfections may mark such efforts, it is surely a noble purpose of human government, when compared with the ambitions of princes or the policies of aristocracies. Our politician, as himself a student, was impressed by the prompt thinking and practical knowledge that was to be found outside books in the daily experience of the political world, produced by the converse of one man with another, when each are pressed by the present need of arriving at a workable solution of some problem of the hour. These experimental gropings after truth and facts are the materials of books in their making. In debate, if there was not the exact decorum of the aristocratic Senate, neither was there its chilling repression of new ideas or want of sympathy with the outside aspirations. The course was free to all—to the youngest and most unknown, if he had aught to say. Though the animating principle of all was devotion to the mass of the people, the Members were not without a spirit of fair-play even to those who were not dominant politically; so that no man in Excelsior need suffer a wrong without being able to claim a hearing from the peoples' Representatives. It must also be said for these legislators that their hands were clean—no imputation of personal corruption attached to any of them. Many of them were poor, but they remained so. The spectacle of paupers engaging in politics, and in a few

years emerging into the ranks of capitalists was not seen in Excelsior.

Nor must we forget that they, plain men though they were, did secure to their people a settled form of safe and orderly Government, which enabled them to live their daily lives in social peace and perfect freedom ; and also to enjoy the relief of openly denouncing their rulers, and demanding new men, without any fear of being secretly seized and exiled to Siberia. They had absolute liberty in making their laws, so there was universal agreement in obeying them. This is a great practical result in an age when you can only govern advanced people by themselves. Compare it with the seething unrest and violent coercion in some nations ; the popular risings and appeals to the force of arms in others ; and the frequent changes in the form of government in others still. To be sure, Excelsior was in the early stage of national life. But we need only look to the continent of Southern America to see other young communities who have not learnt the secret of this peaceful, orderly public life.

There were defects in the ways of this Legislature, some of which will appear in our story, but they sprung from the characteristics and sentiments of the people under whom it acted, and to which the laws that were made gave formal expression. They were the results of social conditions which would have made themselves manifest under any possible Parliament. In Democracies such as Excelsior the Legislature is what the ballot-box makes it. What the people there say, it says ; what they want done, it does ; what they condemn, it renounces.

A perfect people is the correlative of perfect representatives ; the correlation goes on through all the gradations of merit.

But the distinguishing feature of the Parliament of Excelsior was its humanitarian spirit. The rights of Labour, the maintaining of a living wage, the education of the young and the pensioning of the old, the limitation of the hours of work, the sanitation of the factory, the improvement of the homes of the workers, took the place in its counsels that the waging of war and the concerns of dynasties have held in the imperial senates of the world. Righting the wrongs of

women, protecting young people, saving inebriates, extending merciful care to criminals, generally helping all those who had failed in the race, and who, in the expressive language of Scripture, were out of the way, was its natural work. If it at times attempted too much, and sought to do more by laws than the stern decrees of Nature render possible in this hard life, at least its purpose was humane and generous. This was the great element of its strength with the people—also the source of some of its weakness. The danger lay in the mixing of political motives with charitable aspirations.

It is a grand note that Democracy, taught by Christianity, strikes of sympathy for the poor and the unfortunate, and of which our legislators in Excelsior were the exponents. That sympathy may at times be marked even with selfish feelings, but the world is the richer for it. In what condition would the human race be if it were to be lost, and we reverted to the ideas of the ancients, who did not know what a world-wide compassion meant?

Our politician could not help comparing the new state of things with that shown by Sir Samuel Romilly to exist in the Imperial Parliament early in the century. Referring to one of his Bills, to mitigate the severity of the Criminal Law, he says:

‘It is but a few nights ago that, while I was standing at the bar of the House of Commons, a young man, the brother of a peer, whose name is not worth setting down, came up to me, and breathing in my face the nauseous fumes of his undigested debauch, stammered out, “I am against your Bill: I am for hanging all.” I was confounded, and endeavouring to find out some excuse for him, I observed that I supposed he meant that the certainty of punishment affording the only prospect of suppressing crimes, the laws, whatever they were, ought to be executed. “No, no,” he said, “it is not that. There is no good done by mercy. They only get worse. I would hang them all up at once.”’

Unto such a legislature, then, was our politician introduced, to work as his destiny might lead him.

Of the friends with whom he talked over his success and prospects, one of the earliest was Arthur Hartpole, the editor of the *News Letter*. Hartpole, while congratulating him, could not help, as the conversation went on, and Frank-

fort enthusiastically referred to the noble opportunities that the position of Representative of the people opened out before a man, striking a note of warning, not unlike that sounded, as his parting salutation, by Karl Brumm, amidst the cackling of his geese and the shrieking of his parrots.

‘Yes, I am glad that you are in, old fellow, as you went for it, and that you have such high hopes about the position. But don’t forget that sage advice given by wise men to those about to marry.’

‘What? Don’t?’ replied Frankfort. ‘It’s too late to say that now. I am married—politically at least.’

‘Oh no, not that,’ answered Hartpole. ‘Only this word of wisdom. Now that you are married—if you like to put it that way—don’t expect anything too ethereal from the state. For one thing, you can’t speak your mind now as you used to do.’

‘Why not? Can’t I speak as freely as you can? I intend to speak my mind, I can tell you. A statesman should endeavour to form public opinion, as well as to express it.’

‘Good intentions, Mr. Frankfort—good intentions!’ exclaimed Hartpole. ‘Your flight is high, but it may prevent you seeing the ground. If you don’t take care you may find yourself the right man in the wrong place. No; if you want to create and govern public opinion, you should come here and join me, and shed printer’s ink. Neither of us can, perhaps, say absolutely and merely what we think. But I can speak out to some extent, and I partly form public opinion, as well as express it. You politicians have to take it as we give it to you.’

‘Take whatever the Press tell us?’

‘Well, very much so. In fact, under our system, the outward show of authority and the reality of power are separated. You cannot combine them.’

‘According to your view then, legislators are only so many tongues of brass and lungs of leather, to bellow out what they are told.’

‘Oh, don’t put it too strongly, my friend. I only remind you of the trammels that your public position brings with it; and,’ he added with a quiet smile, throwing himself

back in his chair, 'that in the political show one set figures on the boards, another pulls the wires.'

'Come in there,' Hartpole exclaimed in response to a gentle, irresolute tap at the door; and the door half-opening, the bare head of Mr. Walter Crane of the Water Bureau appeared, pushing through, about half-way down, a little above where the lock was.

'Beg your Honer's pardon—some papers from His Honer, Mr. Lavender,' he said in the mildest tone, still looking downwards along the side of the wall and creeping gently into the room. As he looked round, he saw Frankfort, and the upper half of his body took a still more decadent position; his cap, which he held in his hand, was dropped incontinently on the floor, as he touched his bald head, in token that he would pull his forelock if he had one to pull, and exclaimed—

'It's proud I am to see your Honer, as an Honorable Member, and to further ye my respects on your Honorable election, and making them specially to your Honer after all your kindness to M'Glumpy's boy!'

'M'Glumpy's boy!' exclaimed our politician, startled by this unexpected apparition of his blunder. 'Why, what do you know about M'Glumpy's boy? What have you got to do with him?'

'Sure, isn't his father Rimy and me cousins, your Honer; or leastways, anyhow, Rimy's father and mine were cousins together, wern't they?'

'Oh well, Crane, cousin or no cousin, don't thank me for that: the whole thing was a mistake. The boy could not read or write. I cancelled my nomination for him as letter-carrier; so he is out of it.'

'Indeed now, does yer Honer say so? Well, now, and that's strange. And Rimy, me cousin there, the other day only, was saying——'

But here Walter Crane was interrupted by a cough that often troubled him at certain times, and on this occasion, in fact, prevented him from finishing his sentence. Had he been able to finish it, he would have said that Rimigius M'Glumpy, the aforesaid Irish cousin, being on a visit about some business to the city, had, only a few days before, told

him triumphantly that all was right about young Terry's appointment, and how the improved appearance of Mary Garvin's shop, and the well-cleaned front windows thereof, told of the industry and diligence of the new letter-carrier. Walter Crane was not aware that a great man has said, 'Woe to him who tells all he knows upon any subject,' nevertheless he instinctively thought that it would be wiser to speak of something else. So he observed—his kind face looking milder than ever, for he had an innate reverence for all Members of Parliament, past or present—'Honerable Mr. Meeks, very nice gentleman, so kind-spoken and attentive like to every one—very sorry for the Honorable Mr. Meeks. But he kept us very busy about the Reservoir; and I wonder now, your Honer——' continued Crane, looking round Frankfort's feet.

'Why, what's the matter now, Crane?' exclaimed our politician rather abruptly, being put out by this dual appearance of skeletons—M'Glumpy and the Reservoir.

'Oh, it was only, your Honer, the Honorable Mr. Lavender was just observing the other day—he was saying whether your Honer wouldn't be like thinking of a special grant for it, as a national work, your Honer, according as the Honorable Mr. Meeks used to say about it.'

As a fact, Lavender had said nothing about it; but Walter Crane wanted to know how Frankfort would take the idea, comparing in his observant mind what Meeks would have done. Our politician soon set his fears at rest.

'No, no, Crane, no special grant for me. The thing's done for, for the present at any rate.'

If this was a relief to the head porter of the Irrigation Bureau, it was also a surprise to him. He was somewhat staggered by it, and wanted to think over what it meant. So he commenced the series of obeisances with which he usually prefaced his leave-taking of eminent personages.

'An' it's proud his Honer Mr. Lavender will be to see you, and also all the gentlemen and His Excellency the Minister himself.'

'Thank you, Crane; that's all right. Good-bye,' said Frankfort.

'I believe he is a very honest fellow that,' he continued,

as Crane's bending figure seemed to creep or fade through the doorway.

'He has one recommendation for all you politicians,' replied Hartpole, 'that, at any rate, he professes to reverence you. It is something to have even lip-worship; though I suppose every slave has, in his inner mind, thoughts of his master which he regards as of no use to any one but the owner.'

'Why, don't you think that the public have reverence for us, then?'

'Well, well,' replied Hartpole with a laugh, as they shook hands at parting, 'we won't dispute about that now, my honest politician. The question is that this debate be now adjourned. Ask me that again twelve months hence.'

Hartpole was quite right in saying that Walter Crane had reverence for the politicians. At the same time, this did not prevent him from also having a pretty keen notion of their weak points, which, however, he kept profoundly to himself, except on the Sunday when he eased his feelings by speaking out at his nephew's cottage in Grubb Lane. The Ministers of the day he, to all appearances, worshipped, especially the Minister of the Irrigation Bureau. When a mysterious Providence dethroned them and put other objects of worship in their place, it was a trial to him, but he submissively transferred his devotion to the new ones. He took no public part in politics, except that he had Liberal sympathies when the Liberals were in, and Conservative sympathies when the Conservatives were in; but always was an assiduous public servant.

For the political world in Excelsior was divided into those two time-honoured parties. There was also a small but intrepid Populist party, which the two others secretly feared and openly courted. As the Province was the home of a young industrial community, with no privileged classes, no unjust disabilities, no pauper masses, it was obvious that the serious subjects of mere political difference between the people must be few. All had started as struggling settlers less than a century before, a handful of poor men, with a continent for their heritage. They had as yet no great questions such as have divided men in older lands; none,

for example, like the slavery problem in America or the Irish question in England. They had, of course, their social differences. Most of these centred in varying phases of that most ancient, yet never out of date, controversy between the better off and the worse off—the claims of property and the rights of labour. The more fully popular power is developed, the more what are called ‘politics’ centre round and settle down about this vital problem in human affairs. And here there is something to dispute about. Here there are on the surface motives for antagonism and conflict, though it is quite true that at bottom the permanent interests of both are identical. The action of the political sphere develops and intensifies the differences, and is apt to lead men off on a false scent. For in it all men are declared to be equal, while, so long as freedom is allowed, they remain distinctly unequal in the Social State, and there is a ceaseless struggle to import by laws and political devices into social life that equality which has been successfully, though artificially, created in the political sphere.

But as neither of the two great parties in Excelsior had accepted as yet the complete Socialist solution of this problem, though each courted the Populist party, there was, in fact, no very marked difference in their principles. Several of the most important Liberal measures had been passed by the Conservatives when they were in power. Nevertheless, they kept up due conflict with one another, the one being stigmatised as fossil Tories, the other as reckless Revolutionists. The Honourable William Brereton, the Premier, was the leader of the Conservatives, who had been in power for the past three years ; while Sir Donald MacLever was the chief of the Liberals, and was expecting the turn of his party for office to come round without much further delay.

Mr. Brereton was a self-made and a self-educated man, who early in life went to sea as a sailor boy, and by industry and force of character reached, while still a young man, the position of master of a ship trading to the islands of the South Seas, with a share of the profits in each venture. After a few years he was able to retire with a competence, and having prudently invested, as a sleeping partner in the

leading soft goods store in Miranda, he was able to devote himself to public affairs, for which he had that natural bent which, when it possesses any one, never lets him rest till it is satisfied, or he is soured. His frank good-nature and practical capacity soon brought him to the front, notwithstanding that his proclivities went in the Conservative direction. But he was not bigoted in his devotion to Tory principles, nor indeed to any special lines of policy. He did not pretend to mark out the course on the political chart very far ahead. He preferred to navigate the barque of State, as he used to do his ship among the islands, from point to point as he went along, and as it seemed most profitable or convenient to do so ; always managing the ship on sound principles, and without any reckless navigation. He was honest, sharp, boisterous, diffusive, and popular, notwithstanding his politics. He might not be a statesman, but he was a good manager for the everyday work of an industrial community. He was blunt in his speech, and it was to his credit that he was never blunter than when he was dealing with anything that he thought was a job. Indeed, at times the discomfited applicants in such a case could scarcely help appreciating his indignation, enforced as it was by sundry strong and picturesque expressions, that were admired by all parties in Excelsior. Some of these were drawn from the breezy atmosphere in which he had passed his youth ; and his favourite invocation of the ' Lord Tomnoddie ' was as well known and of as good standing in Excelsior as the Duke of Wellington's ' Twopenny damn ' was some generations ago in the greater world of England. He could not make a set speech ; but he got on very well without that accomplishment, as he was fair enough in a rattling reply or a forcible repartee. And though, in his efforts to get his ideas afloat, he was apt to run them aground, he had the clear eye of the man of business for seeing through humbug. On the whole, it was to the credit of Excelsior that William Brereton was a personally popular man—worthy, serviceable, good-natured William Brereton.

Sir Donald MacIever was of a different type. He came of one of the ' best families ' among the early settlers of the

Province. The country that his father took up, known as 'Land's End,' owing to its distance, then regarded as great, from the city, turned out to be among the best country in Excelsior for stock. Old Mr. MacLever, by his industry and keen management, made it one of the most valuable properties in the district, and adorned the home station with an extensive orchard and flower-garden, which were much admired by the public of the neighbouring village of Land's End. The only drawback to the general satisfaction with MacLever's plantations, as being a show place for that part of the country, was that he employed a large staff of Chinese gardeners, by whose patient handiwork it was that the desert was made to blossom. And they were believed to work long and irregular hours. This was distinctly contrary to the popular feeling, and also to the law. But the old man cared nothing for popular feeling, for he was no aspirant for public approbation, and thought of little beyond the interest of his property. And as for the law, it was impossible to enforce it against him, as the Chinese worked in the most confusing shifts, and were so hard to distinguish one from another and to identify separately. He used to say that he would rather see his garden smile than the people smile any day. As young MacLever was intended for the law, and the William Dorland University was not then founded, his father sent him to London to study for his profession. But, being more interested in men and manners than in the antiquated intricacies of pleading or conveyancing, he persuaded his parent to let him finish his education at Heidelberg, with the view of making him more a man of the world and preparing him to take a part in public life when he returned to Excelsior. As the family estate justified such an aspiration, his father consented, and in a few years young Donald returned to Excelsior quite a gentleman, and fully prepared to make a figure in public affairs and to elbow his way to the front. He not only regarded this object as the final cause of his own existence, but as a result to which it was only right that others should also contribute their exertions.

He certainly did not strike one as being designed by nature for a democrat. Of the two men, Mr. Brereton

seemed to be rather to that manner born. Yet he soon appeared as a prominent man among the Liberals. There could be no doubt that theirs was the winning side in the long run. When his respected father inquired rather anxiously of him the reason of some of his early political declarations, he replied, mitigating any tendency to sneer, 'Well, sir, I presume you would not desire a young man to mortgage his life to lost causes.' While welcomed by the Liberals as a valuable acquisition, he was still connected by substantial ties with the 'respectable people.' It was a feature in his career which surprised some that he always managed to keep up this connection in social affairs. However strong the display of his democratic principles might be in public, he was ever, in a personal point of view, the gentleman Donald MacLever, who was educated in England, and who had completed his early training at Heidelberg, and who was quite at home in the leading and somewhat exclusive club of Miranda. Here the business men and the landed gentry of the Province would greet him with a warmth, mingled with a natural deference to the popular leader, which, if not wholly guileless, was in fact all the more pleasing to him on that account, as it testified emphatically to his power and his personal importance. When, at lunch or dinner around the club table, they would deprecate some strong Democratic sentiment that he had just favoured the public with, or denounce some proposal of his party as pointing to nothing less than a 'dividing up' among all of the good things of this world now enjoyed by a few, the respectable Tribune of the people would gravely listen to their arguments—he was rather a silent person in company—deny their conclusions, and propose a game of billiards. Over the billiard table he would turn the conversation to the prospects of investments in stock-raising in the adjoining province of Amanta, and discuss in an expert manner the chances, laying down in his authoritative style that twenty per cent could be knocked out of them if the Border duties were properly adjusted.

Then, though he adopted the most advanced views of the day as they came forward, and made at times democratic declarations of an alarming character, he was ever,

when in office, quietly accessible to little concessions in practical administration to the landed interest and the capitalist class generally; while Mr. Brereton, with all his conservatism, fired up about what he denounced as 'jobs,' and was perpetually in trouble with those interests about claims such as those that Mr. Lamborn had enlarged upon when detailing his Rabbit and other grievances to Frankfort at The Blocks. In truth, many of the men of property quietly preferred Sir Donald, with his revolutionary ideas and administrative accessibility, to the noisy obstinacy and little economies of his rival.

Hilljohn, the landowner near Brassville, would exclaim to Hedger, his lawyer, 'Positively we ought to unite against MacLever! Anything more unprincipled than his conduct in speaking in that indirect way to the Populist deputation about the Single Tax I never knew.'

'Yes, yes,' the lawyer would reply quietly, 'that is all right, Mr. Hilljohn. We can discount all that. The fact is, the great point with us now is the rabbits. We don't know how his politics may work out, but we do know that the rabbits will work us out, if we can't get the Government to buy the patent and plank down the half cost for the wheat. We must really, my dear sir,' Hedger would continue, looking up from his office chair in an explanatory manner to his client—'we must really think of the day that is passing over us, or we may not live to see the later day that you are afraid of.'

Whatever principles, then, he professed, the wealthy people thought it better not to break with him, but to keep him one of themselves, and in the social circle, anyway. He was such a very respectable man. In fact, in the personality of Mr.—afterwards Sir Donald—MacLever there were three distinct interests involved. The Democrats were interested in him because he was useful to them; the better-off people because they hoped to restrain, if not ultimately to reclaim, the wanderer. And then there was Sir Donald, who was deeply interested in himself. This latter was the only sincere feeling of the three. The one deep and genuine belief in the politician's nature was in himself. To advance himself by some means—if not by

the front door, then by the back—was the set purpose of his life.

He soon became important to his party, and displaced some bungling but sincere blusterers who had spent years in advocating Liberal principles, and then, in the most respectable and severe manner possible, led his party, and led them successfully. The chief result of this success was his own instalment in office as the head of the Government, with a Ministry made up of two or three small men who had ever followed him with canine fidelity, and one or two thoroughly rough diamonds of the party, who held alarmingly advanced views, which, however, were much tempered by the mellowing influence of official responsibility. The great recommendation of his colleagues, in the Premier's eyes, was that they were at such an undoubted distance from himself. A decoration followed in due course, and Mr. MacLever became Sir Donald MacLever, K.C.M.G. He was a man grave of aspect (his grey eyes looked out upon you coldly), cynical in manner, measured and slightly hoarse in his tone of speech. At the time when we meet him, he and his party had been out of office for the three years of Mr. Brereton's rule, and they were now anxiously expecting the triumph of Liberal principles.

The Populist party was the third party in Excelsior. It was smaller in numbers in Parliament than either of the other two, but was active, and powerful in a degree far beyond its numbers. In fact, as far as law-making and professing principles in politics, it had it all its own way. It was in outside social facts that it found its obstruction. Mr. David Stoker and Mr. Michael Caffery were its leaders. Mr. Stoker was naturally so, as he was a Dissenter in religion, as in all other things social, so far as he professed religion. With his coadjutor the case was somewhat different. Michael Caffery was in politics independent, aggressive, defiant of authority, and all for what was novel and progressive, and for discarding old Conservative notions. The mere fact that a thing was new and subversive of the ancient order in the State was a recommendation to his favourable opinion of it. To tell him that the political veteran, so-and-so by name, advised a certain course to be

taken with regard to any proposed reform was to set him against the advice. He considered it old-fogeyism. If some boy politician made some startling, novel suggestion, he was careful not to declare against it. If he did not think it well to directly support it, he kept very quiet about it, and sought refuge in ambiguous phrases. And this merely in obedience to his sincere instinct to keep well upon the progressive line of things. He watched from afar Bryan's first struggle with M'Kinley for the presidency of the United States, and warmly sympathised with Bryan because he was young, revolutionary, and defiant of the old standards.

Such was Caffery in public life and on his political side. It is an old saying, often repeated and often forgotten, that every man contains in himself two men. And certainly Michael Caffery, M.H.R., declaiming in the House of Representatives or the market-place was quite a different man from humble, devout Michael Caffery bending before the altar. He had then left one world behind him and got into another and a different one. In this latter world he revered everything he saw, believed everything he heard, and obeyed all orders implicitly. It never occurred to him to say, 'Why is it so?' or, 'Wherefore should I be told to do this?' He never thought of objecting to anything, or even asking a question about it. He started upon the principle that he had now got into the region of faith and obedience, and that there was no place here for argumentation or dispute. He had only to believe, or at least have that state of mind which he believed was believing. There was no doubt that the religious and racial instincts from Ireland, his native land, had much to do with his devotion to the Church. There it was the Church, he considered, of the poor and the oppressed. He had the natural liking of his countrymen for a personal superior, and as this instinct was very much starved in the political world, he compensated his feelings by luxuriantly indulging it in the religious sphere.

On the other hand, the head of his Church, Cardinal M'Gillicuddy, met the politician half-way. He was a man of Christian feelings, warm benevolence, and absolute devotion to his sacred duties. He was an admirable, but rather severe, ruler of the clerical affairs of his archdiocese, and was

ceaseless in his attention to all the spiritual needs of his people. This was his world. Outside it and in public affairs he had the reputation of being rather a Liberal, though how he earned it was not very clear. No one could point to any distinct declaration of his upon any political question, except where the interests of the Church were concerned. Perhaps it was upon the principle that a man is known by his friends, for in so far as he had any political friends, they certainly belonged to the Progressive party. He would have nothing at all to do with your staid old Conservatives, but he was always particularly civil to Mr. Caffery.

It is hard for any of us men to tell what is really in the mind of a brother man. If we may speculate, unquestionably the Cardinal's sole thought and real longing was for the true Church. Founded upon the Rock, and rising high above these mere temporal affairs of human government—fleeting, changing, stumbling along, as they were, from one form into another as the ages went on—that Church could view with benevolent complacency all forms of polity without identifying itself with any. A little extravagance here, or delusive theory there, did not loom largely in the comprehensive view of the observer from the higher standpoint, who was ever penetrated by the sense of the ephemeral nature of the whole thing. Viewed from the altar, the arena of politics seemed insignificant. Thus the churchman, in his lesser character of a citizen, could regard with dignified neutrality principles and theories that seemed full of importance and danger to the politician of the world. By his nature, as has been said, the Cardinal was a benevolent man. He had deep sympathy with the poor. He kept himself poor, and regarded with contempt those who fought only for the rights of wealth and never thought of its duties. The modern Socialist creed, indeed, he absolutely condemned as contrary to the teaching of the Church; but he was well inclined to the socialism of the Fathers, which assumed as its foundation the law of the Gospel. He did not mix in party struggles, but outside these he professed a keen interest in political affairs, and never failed to record his vote in an open, not to say ostentatious, manner; and in all patriotic demonstrations

he took a conspicuous part. Every effort to help the poor had his blessing, and, though he did not commit himself to all the demands of the unemployed, he was understood to have no sympathy with the usual formulas of political economy that were advanced in reply to them.

Mr. Caffery, therefore, as a good Catholic, felt quite safe in advancing all Liberal projects, including the very strongest measures for the help of the poor ; and also in going upon Socialist lines up to a certain point. But he was careful not to commit himself to any of the Socialist ideas about marriage and the family ; and, in a quiet way, he even supported the Catholic schools as distinct from the free, secular, and compulsory of the State.

As has been indicated, Sir Donald MacLever had, like most great men, his personal followers ; and they were selected from those who could never be his rivals. The most prominent among these was Mr. Edward Du Tell. He was not a heroic style of man. But it is a redeeming feature in the poorest natures when they have some one object to worship, and Mr. Du Tell sincerely worshipped Sir Donald. His name showed that he was of French origin, but his family had been for many generations settled in England. He rather boasted that he was a descendant of that Captain Du Tell whom Pepys mentions as filling the office of Yeoman of the Cellar and Cup-bearer to the Duke of York in his time ; but now, after such a lapse of years, there was nothing French left about his descendant except his name. He was a little man, of sharp intellect, as was partly indicated by the keen, inquiring way in which he peered round upon you, and if not possessed of high political principles, at least did not feel the want of them. He appeared to be always looking about and looking into things, in search of a satisfaction that he never fully got—unless indeed from Sir Donald. His views on Liberalism were so advanced that he was readily elected for one of the smaller popular constituencies to the House of Representatives ; and in public affairs he soon revealed an ancestral tendency by acting as a sort of political cup-bearer to Sir Donald.

One important purpose in life which he served was to give to the general public early indication of what it might

be supposed were his patron's views upon questions of the day which were in the first stages of development. Personally he held the most advanced opinions upon all subjects. He would proclaim his adherence to the most progressive ideas of the hour ; and this was commonly taken to indicate that Sir Donald, who was much slower to declare himself, would in the end do the same. But it was found that this supposition was not to be too implicitly trusted ; for, in case of a reaction of public feeling setting in, or the new idea being found, in fact, unworkable, Sir Donald would discard it at the proper time, as a thing not to be thought of ; and then Mr. Du Tell would say nothing more about it, nor would anything more be heard of it in the Liberal leader's circle till it became popular again. But once his chief had declared his opinion in favour of some progressive measure, there was nothing to hinder the fullest expression of his own advanced views.

Du Tell had carefully observed the contest between Meeks and Frankfort at Brassville, and made a note, when our politician was returned, that he had better be looked after. He was just the sort of man to be useful to Sir Donald, so long as he went quietly in harness and minded the bit. At this juncture, just before the meeting of Parliament, Du Tell spent a good deal of his time on the steps leading up to the broad verandah of the House, where he could meet Members as they came for their letters or to keep appointments for seeing their constituents. It was useful to fall in with them in this casual sort of way, when the nature of the interview could be regulated at discretion, and a useless or hostile man dismissed with a few words, while an easy retreat could be made with others to one of the Committee rooms and matters discussed at leisure. As Frankfort, a few days after his return to the city, was walking up the steps of the House, he naturally fell in with Du Tell.

' Ah, my dear sir,' he exclaimed, taking his usual survey round our politician, ' come to join the great cause ! Let me shake you by the hand. He is quite pleased about it ; Meeks run down—worked out—no account. Yes, indeed, he is quite pleased ; and it takes a little to please him, and

no mistake, I assure you.' Du Tell generally referred in conversation to his chief by an impersonal designation.

'Sir Donald?' inquired Frankfort.

'Yes, and he wants to see you too—he does indeed. He is out of town just now; but I think that old Dorland, at your University up there, is arranging for a little spread, you know, for you both to meet. He'll go—I am almost sure he'll go. You'll be in luck to meet him on the quiet. He sometimes comes out with a few people like that—if he takes to them.' And Du Tell looked again round our politician.

'Yes, I should be very glad to meet Sir Donald. I have been only casually introduced to him. There are some public questions that I would like to talk over with him.'

'Well, as to that, d'ye see, I can tell you what he will say on most things that are to the fore now, you know. The great point—I heard him say it only the other day—is to get this Tory crew out. Why, my dear sir,' continued Du Tell, contracting his eyebrows this time into a positive frown, 'where, I ask, is progress, where prosperity, where safety for our institutions, so long as the country is smothered under the incubus of Brereton and Company?'

'But they tell me,' remarked our politician, 'that the first measure of the session which the Government will bring forward is the Bill to enfranchise woman; and we all support that.'

'You don't say so?' exclaimed Du Tell in genuine surprise. 'I knew that old Brereton had given in to it; but I didn't think—well, really, he is 'cuter than I gave him credit for, the old delinquent. But is it so really? How do you know? I thought that I would have——'

'Why, a Miss Hannah Gazelle, a constituent of mine, and secretary to one of the woman's leagues, waited upon him, with a few ladies, at a private interview, to present some resolutions that had been passed; and then he told them that the bell of freedom was ringing, as he expressed it, and that it would be his first Bill—only to keep it quiet. But these things get out in a country town. Some people from Brassville mentioned it to me.'

'Now, that is clever of B. B. I didn't think that Billy

Brereton had it in him, I didn't indeed,' replied Du Tell, who could not restrain some admiration for this astute move on the part of the Premier. 'But I know what *he* will say to it. Since the Loan failed, B. B. is up a tree. No plank to float on. So he launches lovely woman. Never mind—never mind,' continued Du Tell; 'we can put him out and pass the Woman's Bill ourselves, can't we?'

'Are the Government likely to be put out any way, then?' inquired our politician.

'Sure to be. He means it. Shoulder to shoulder we stand, and down goes Monopoly and Toryism. Ah, Billy B., knowing old card,' Mr. Du Tell went on, peering this time into space, as he apostrophised the unconscious Brereton—'ah, Billy B., Woman's Suffrage ain't able to save you—not good works enough. He has got you this time. Your day is over.'

'I suppose they have had about their turn now?' remarked Frankfort.

'Their turn? I should say so. Why, in these advanced times, should old-fogeyism have a turn at all? Why, even in old Europe they advance. You see the cablegrams: the Autocrat of Russia proposes to abolish war.'

'Well, I am afraid it will be found easier to abolish Brereton than to abolish war.'

'Both must go, my dear sir—both must go,' said Du Tell, almost relaxing into a smile at the noble prospect of the joint abolition of War and of Brereton. 'What are standing armies and war but devices to prevent people from asserting themselves? And as for old Billy Brereton—why, sure enough, speak of him and here he comes along. Never met him? I will introduce you.'

And Du Tell waved his hand, in a manner quite cheerful for him, at the Honourable Mr. Brereton as that gentleman came walking down the steps, having just left an informal meeting of some of his newly-retained supporters in the Ministers' Room.

'Ah, Mr. Premier, glad to see you looking well and strong, like your Government. Let me present to you one of your new supporters—a good staunch one—stand by you at a pinch—when the numbers are close, you see. Never

say that the Du Tells were wanting in the loving cup, from the days of the Duke of York downwards—ha! ha! ha!’ and he laughed at his joke with a hilarity that did not seem to sit very easily upon him.

‘Why? who? what are the bearings now? Where have we run on to this time?’ inquired Mr. Brereton, who it so happened had not met Frankfort before, and in his matter-of-fact way supposed on the moment that Du Tell had met one of the Government supporters coming late to the meeting.

‘Ah, why? who? indeed. This is Professor Frankfort of the University—Brassville, you know. Old Meeks defunct. Good man, I say, always support you—when you are right, d’ye see? *when!*’ said Du Tell. ‘Sorry to leave you, gentlemen—sorry to leave you,’ he continued; ‘but friends are best left alone, you know’; and with waving hand Du Tell hurried away rapidly to the Opposition Room, to write a line to Sir Donald, so as to catch the afternoon post, informing him of Brereton’s clever move in putting Woman’s Suffrage in the forefront of the coming campaign.

‘I really don’t know,’ exclaimed Frankfort, as he and Brereton shook hands, ‘that my friend Mr. Du Tell, though he was speaking jocularly, was far from the truth when he said that I would support you when you were right. Though I am a Liberal, I should always like to support any Government that was doing the right thing.’

‘More fool you if you did, my friend,’ cheerfully responded Mr. Brereton, as he gave him a lively tap on the chest to emphasise his remark. The Premier was in appearance something like a nautical model of the typical John Bull; and he looked straight out at you when he spoke to you, as if, while he wanted to see through you, he was also quite willing that you should see through him.

‘No; no good, sir,’ he continued; ‘Mr. Dillon, friend of mine—friend of yours—he tells me that you are a Liberal.’

‘Certainly I am a Liberal,’ said Frankfort in an emphatic tone.

‘Oh yes, to be sure; but I mean, you see, that he says you really believe all about it—genuine case. Yes, he does

indeed,' continued the Premier, giving his companion a confidential nod. 'Well, then, all right, say I; go it Liberal horse, whatever you are, hack or charger, straight gallop ahead, and good luck to you.'

'Thank you, Mr. Brereton. But I was only saying that I would not care to oppose any Government in trying to do the right thing upon any great public question.'

'Why not, my blessed Liberal, if your party wants to? What use is a man to his party if he only supports them when he likes to? Wait a bit, you'll see. Battledore and shuttlecock—ping-pong business—it's all right. But here,' continued Mr. Brereton, as some of his followers came down the steps—'here are some of my recruits—taken the shilling. Come along, gentlemen—come along'; and giving Frankfort a cheerful nod in parting, he walked away with them down the street.

Sure enough, as Du Tell expected, when Frankfort got back to his rooms he found a note from Mrs. Dorland, inviting him to dinner that day week in order to meet Sir Donald MacLever and a few friends. The Honourable William Dorland's principle in politics was much the same as some great men's principle with regard to religion—to find out the strongest and most feasible principle, and then to adhere to it without cavil. He therefore cultivated friendly relations with Sir Donald, as he regarded his party as the more powerful of the two, and as the one best fitted to deal trenchantly with the great Currency question. This was not the result of a sordid personal self-seeking. He had shown his public spirit in founding the University. Mixed considerations influenced him. While he and the University too had a deep interest in the cause of Silver, he also had a belief, which he accepted without any deep scrutiny, that industrial progress generally in Excelsior, and indeed in the world, depended on that cause. How far that belief was induced by that interest is one of those things that belong to what philosophers have termed the sphere of the unknowable. Conscious bias and unconscious: who can discriminate between them? Then he had the natural wish of every powerful, successful man to belong to the cause that was waxing rather than to that which was waning. This

feeling rested in him upon the conviction that it is only the part of common-sense to accept the inevitable, and that it is no duty of man—certainly not of the practical man—to keep conning over abstract questions of wise and unwise. Another consideration that influenced him was that Mr. Brereton had proved intractable in Government business matters connected with the great Van-Dorland Mine, and had refused some concessions which, when mentioned incidentally in conversation with Du Tell, that gentleman said he happened to know Sir Donald thought ought to be granted to all mine-owners in similar circumstances. So William Dorland gave his general adhesion to Sir Donald, and Sir Donald, in his cold way, reciprocated the confidence of the Silver King. It was, as has been said, part of his policy to keep up, in the private sphere, fair personal relations with the representatives of the great interests of the country; while politically, as head of the popular party, he held a severe tone, in a vague sort of way, towards them in public. Each of these men, eminent in their respective walks of life, understood one another, and did not weigh in golden scales the respective values of their mutual confidences. Both regarded our politician with some interest, as being probably a useful pawn on the political chess-board. Why not? It was natural that he should be useful, as obviously his interest was the University interest, and both were identical with the William Dorland interest.

Frankfort had not, as the reader may have gathered, much experience in society, and on the evening of the dinner he found that he was the first to arrive at the President's mansion. The minutes, however, passed quickly, aided by the vigorous conversation of Mr. Dorland and the quiet, sensible refrain of his wife's remarks. Mrs. Dorland was a middle-aged lady of a comfortable and rather sleek appearance. Without seeking to make any display, she showed considerable common-sense in what she said. She was homely in her habits, one of which was to have always on hand a piece of knitting of a special description, which she continually worked at, even on festive occasions, sitting among her guests. Dr. Johnson, in his Dictionary, defines knitting or network to be 'anything reticulated or decussated at equal

distances, with interstices between the intersections.' This sounds complex. But the work in Mrs. Dorland's hands seemed to be simple, for she pursued it rapidly and serenely, while all the time she carried on the conversation with activity and vigilance. Indeed, the conversation seemed to get mixed up with the knitting; for she had a way of enforcing the point of her remarks by giving an emphatic dive or dig with the right-hand needle as if to fix, once for all, the truth of what she was saying or the mistake that she wanted to expose.

Before Frankfort could get very far in a discussion with Mrs. Dorland about her proposed new Regulations for the Cookery School, which was affiliated to the University, he was agreeably surprised by the announcement of Mr., Mrs., and Miss Lamborn of The Blocks. The shearing being now over, the Senator was at liberty to come to town, and though personally he preferred The Blocks to all other places, it was ever a pleasure to him to gratify the natural wish of his wife and daughter for a change of scene.

Meeting them was to Frankfort like meeting old friends, and Mrs. Lamborn was as kind and as languid as ever. The other guests followed in quick succession. There were Alderman Jortin, one of the Board of Overseers of the University, and his two daughters, who were generally described in society, with that keen sense of one another's failings that comes naturally to us, as 'the plain Miss Jortins.' Mrs. Jortin, who always felt devout feelings of thankfulness to Providence when she could escape a dinner-party, stayed at home with her eldest child, who was known in Miranda as the 'pretty widow.' She had made an unfortunate marriage, and generally left it to her two younger sisters to represent the family upon festive occasions. The business relations between the Alderman, who was the owner of the great Anvil Iron Works of Miranda, and Dorland were extensive. Each regarded the other as a sound man. Mr. Lavender, the Secretary of the Irrigation Bureau; two of the Professors of the University and their ladies; Mr. Urias Carson, proprietor of the *Rising Sun* newspaper (who held quite a dignified aspect to his own paper, and had, it seemed, no idea of what the editors would put into it till he informed himself by

looking at its columns each morning), and Mr. M'Ivor, the President's confidential clerk, made up the party to meet Sir Donald, Mrs. M'Ivor being absent owing to indisposition. The great man himself was yet to come. He never made the mistake that Frankfort in his inexperience fell into of coming too early. On the contrary, he generally came last, rather late, and thus found the company waiting for him and ready to receive him. So when the attendant announced 'Sir Donald MacLever and Mr. Du Tell,' there was a slight stir among the guests, and Mr. Dorland moved down to the door at the end of the long drawing-room to receive him, bringing Frankfort with him, so as to specially introduce him before they joined the general circle.

Lady MacLever was absent in Europe for the sake of her health, and so Sir Donald had only Mr. Du Tell to accompany him. As he bent forward in a stately manner to shake hands with the President, Frankfort felt that the two gray eyes were resting upon him.

'Sir Donald, let me introduce to you our very latest politician, Professor Frankfort, one of your party. He represents a link of union between the University and the Parliament.'

'Ha, indeed. How do you do, Professor? I have heard of you.'

There was nothing very much in this remark of Sir Donald's; but it was said in a slow, slightly gruff tone, with a little drawl in it, and as he spoke it, it seemed as if there was a good deal in it. He continued, looking at the new politician, as he went on—

'A link of union? Is it a valid marriage or only a temporary attachment.'

'Oh, a valid union by all means, Sir Donald,' replied Frankfort—'honourable conditions on both sides.'

'What? No incompatibility of temper?'

Sir Donald rather prided himself upon saying grating things, and did not discard the flavour of a sneer. It was congenial to his own feelings to do so, and was besides, he considered, much more effective in the world than the easy manner of the good-natured man. So he was rather pleased than otherwise when Dorland said, in a deprecating way,

as he led back to the ladies, 'Come now, Sir Donald, surely you can see no just cause or impediment to this union.'

Du Tell, who in the stir had been overlooked, came slipping up behind, and looking inquisitively round Frankfort's shoulder, remarked to him, in an undertone—

'Not bad that, is it? Marriage or temporary attachment. Not bad. It's his way, you know. But he's right. You will find him right.'

The party being now complete, the dinner procession was soon arranged; Sir Donald, of course, taking Mrs. Dorland, and Miss Lamborn being given to Frankfort, with a jocular remark by the President about the special need that he now had to make himself agreeable to any one from Brassville. As Mrs. Lamborn passed by, with her hand resting in a languid manner on Alderman Jortin's arm, she remarked that now he and Eilly could enjoy themselves talking about sermons and all the odd things they were able to think of. They had not the full complement of ladies to gentlemen, so Mr. Du Tell had to go by himself; but he was favoured by having a seat sufficiently near to Sir Donald to enable him to hear that gentleman's remarks in conversation distinctly.

Mr. Dorland's entertainments and company were rather of the substantial than the highly fashionable type. To refer to the common dairy metaphor, they represented rather the skimmed milk of society than the cream that settles on the top. But, after all, where would the cream be if it were not for the milk from which it is skimmed? There was a good deal of money in Dorland's parties, and not a little influence, both territorial and political. Excelsior high society regarded them as not properly within the charmed circle; but Dorland, on his part, manfully held his own ground socially, and even maintained at his table a tone of conversation which was quite in defiance of the elegant and exclusive topics of high life. As President of the University, he rather affected literary topics; and his converse with the College men, assisted by his own natural intelligence, enabled him to deal with them in a respectable manner.

‘Sir Donald, I admired your address in opening the Land’s End Free Library,—something, a bit of stuff in every sentence.’

‘When you ask a number of your fellow-creatures to sit still for an hour on a deal form, there should be something in your sentences to sit still for,’ slowly remarked Sir Donald.

‘Just so, something to put into your mouth mentally and chew, like in Macaulay’s writings,’ continued the President.

‘Macaulay,—do you swear by Macaulay then?’ inquired Sir Donald.

‘To be sure I do. If you have a ten minutes to spare, take him up, and you will find something to remember in the ten minutes,’ returned Dorland.

Sir Donald only shook his head.

‘You consider him, Sir Donald, I presume, too highly coloured to be accurate?’ interposed Frankfort, whose attention had been attracted by the name of a favourite author. He was rather interested to know what the shake of the head indicated.

Sir Donald leant back in his chair, and partly turning towards him, observed—

‘Too popular for my taste. He said he would beat the ‘ast fashionable novel at the lending library,—perhaps he has.’

There was a slight pause after this judgment, and one of the Professors appeared to be about to interpose something, possibly on the historian’s behalf, when Sir Donald, clearing his voice and speaking in a decisive manner, as if to stop the coming intervention, continued, ‘Macaulay in literature and Gladstone in politics have been so lavishly rewarded in their own day that the account is overdrawn, and there is nothing left for the future. They have already eaten their cakes.’ And Sir Donald looked up, and slightly elevated his eyebrows, as if to see if any one either would or could dispute what he had said.

Our politician could not help thinking that whatever plausibility there might be in this criticism, it was rather an odd one to come from so pronounced a champion of popular ideas in Excelsior. But he only replied—

‘As for being popular, Sir Donald, Byron has been very popular too; but no one can deny his genius.’

‘Byron, the cranky rascal!’ exclaimed Mr Lamborn. ‘Why, when we were sending Woodall the order to go home for the books for our Brassville Literary Institute, Mr. Keech insisted that the complete edition of Byron should not be included in the list, and I believe he was not far wrong.’

‘Really now, is that so?’ remarked Lavender. ‘Leave out Byron? Why, that is like my old friend Barlow, when he was furnishing his new house there at Cowpasture, he sent home an order to his London agent for two tons of well-selected books; but no Byron or Shelley. Some one had told him something bad about them’—and the Secretary of the Water Bureau looked up with a quiet laugh.

‘Why, was Byron such a bad man as that?’ inquired Miss Lamborn, turning to Frankfort. ‘When I was at school at Dresden, I remember we had, for the breaking-up examination, to turn “The Isles of Greece” “of the English Boet Lord Byron,” as old Dr. Glugg called him, into German. I thought it very fine, but it was difficult to get the right German words for it. It took me the whole afternoon. And was he so bad really?’

‘Well, yes; a poor creature in one way—a grand genius in another. Bad heart—unhappy in his marriage. His own fault.’

‘Why, do you know now,’ said Eilly Lamborn, full of interest in what she was going to say—‘do you know, that reminds me. We were dining at Mr. Brookfield’s last evening, and he was saying to father—do you know what he said?’

‘No; but I should like to hear you tell.’

‘Well, he said,’ she continued, desirous to hear what a Professor’s comment would be on this strange statement of Mr. Brookfield—‘he said this, that most men of genius were unhappy in their family life. Was not that an odd thing to say?’

‘Really?’

‘Yes, and he mentioned several, Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Addison, and others that I forget, and then he spoke of Byron and Shelley. And he mentioned Carlyle and Dickens too; but Byron particularly.’

‘And did he say why?’ inquired Frankfort, more interested in the speaker’s manner than the story itself of the mishaps of genius, which was already familiar to him.

‘Why? Oh, I did not follow all he said. It was about want of sympathy, you know, and vanity and genius being irritable, and things of that sort,—in fact, that they should not get married at all.’

‘And what did you say, Miss Lamborn?’

‘I say? I was only listening. I said nothing. But that young American, Mr. Fooks, who was sitting next to me, said in a quiet tone, as if he were speaking to himself, when there was a pause—he has such an odd way with him —“I am so glad, then, that I am not a man of genius.” It was so comical, we could not help laughing at him.’

‘Or with him?’ queried Frankfort.’

‘Well, at him or with him—as if any one cared what he said. And, do you know,’ added Eilly Lamborn, looking seriously at her companion—‘do you know, I don’t think that Mr. Brookfield quite liked all the laughing about it. And he went on to say, in just a cross sort of way, that most of the great men never married at all. He mentioned such a number—Newton and Locke and Kant, and all the philosophers, and the great authors too.’

‘It is a grave subject after all,’ remarked Frankfort. ‘Wreck of hopes of genius, noble barques but sunken rocks, and so on. However, I suppose it is that genius cannot stand the discipline of marriage.’

‘The discipline?’ inquired Miss Lamborn.

‘Yes, the discipline; that is what one of these unhappy great men terms it. Let us hope it did him good, however unpleasant.’

But here this interesting conversation was cut short by Mrs. Dorland and the other ladies rising to go to what in old times was called their ‘withdrawing-room’—not now, as of old, to enable the gentlemen to get comfortably drunk by themselves, but merely to allow a short half-hour’s temperate enjoyment, the feeble survival of the coarse customs of our rude forefathers. In these days of enlightenment and rising independence of woman, there is a growing jealousy of all exclusive customs and privileges of men, and in some of the

more advanced quarters this earlier flitting of woman from the festive table is being shaded off to an irreducible minimum. The next stage will be for the men to rise with the ladies and meekly follow them to the tea-table. Wherefore not? Too much wine is as bad for man as for woman; and as for smoking, why not neither or both?

Mrs. Dorland, though opposed to these very advanced views, yet allowed Mr. Dorland but a short interval for gentlemen's time, so there was only a few minutes available for men's talk, which soon turned towards the political situation, that was getting more and more exciting as the meeting of Parliament drew near.

'Awkward fix for Brereton. No Loan. Fierce dogs you politicians when hungry'—Mr. Dorland led off from the head of the table.

'I hear that he means to feed us on females. Woman's Suffrage first on the legislative mahogany,' remarked Sir Donald, slowly moving his wine-glass at arm's length from him, and holding it up as if to get a good look through and through it.

'Not half bad that. Quite himself to-night. Feed us with females—good,' whispered Du Tell to Frankfort, next to whom, in the reshuffling of the gentlemen consequent on the departure of the ladies, he was sitting.

'You support Woman's Suffrage, I think, Sir Donald?' observed our politician.

'Eh? I support?' replied Sir Donald, looking past our politician but not at him, with some surprise in his tone, as if it was rather a liberty to ask a man in his position what he did support. He continued, with an indifferent air—'Yes, I do support it. I support all that is progressive—harmless.'

'That's it—progressive, harmless, bull's-eye hit again. Progressive, harmless—may we not add just, sir?' inquired Du Tell.

'Whatever is progressive is just,' replied Sir Donald.

'Quite so. True indeed—I had not thought of that.'

'It is a great reform,' said Frankfort, with some emphasis.

He felt the cold eyes turned towards him, as Sir Donald remarked in a deep tone of voice, 'Ah, just so, but who are you going to reform? Men or women?'

‘Both,’ replied our politician.

‘Ah well, having reached such a satisfactory *status quo*, I think we may join unreformed woman in the drawing-room,’ said Sir Donald, as he rose solemnly from the table. He held such an important position in the President’s estimation that this usurpation of the function of the host was readily acquiesced in, and Mr. Dorland and the rest rose with him.

Mr. Du Tell, always anxious to conciliate the Press, in going out deferentially made way for Mr. Urias Carson to precede him, and took the opportunity to observe to him, ‘That’s good. You can appreciate a thing put neatly. “Join unreformed woman,” that’s neat, it is.’

‘Sir Donald is sound on the question though, is he not?’ inquired the newspaper proprietor.

‘Sound?—all sound,’ replied Du Tell.

‘Do you know, Mrs. Dorland,’ said Sir Donald, advancing to his hostess as he entered the drawing-room, and making rather an angular bow to her—‘do you know that our Professor here says that he will reform both men and women by Female Suffrage. What do you say, madam?’

Mrs. Dorland was sitting next Mrs. Lamborn, as being her chief guest among the ladies, conversing with her on the subject of the proper age of girls to come to the cooking class, and also whether the food cooked for practical instruction should be used for a mid-day meal for the poorer pupils or sent on to the Convalescent Hospital. Both ladies were quite interested in their discussion, and Mrs. Lamborn, who had a really kind heart, forgot her languid manner in a keen advocacy of the claims of the poor weakly people at the Hospital; while the knitting needles of Mrs. Dorland went fast as she debated the conflicting interests concerned in the daily distribution of this food. She was, in fact, slightly impatient when Sir Donald came up with his half-mocking interruption. So she looked up at him in a rather hurried manner, and exclaimed—

‘What do I say, Sir Donald? Why, what I say is that I pity *them*.’ (Dig with the needle on ‘*them*.’)

‘Now, really, Mrs. Dorland, you are so brief that you are enigmatical. Pray, pity whom—man or woman?’

'Whom? Why, you men to be sure. Poor *creatures*.' (Dig on '*creatures*.')

'But, Mrs. Dorland, may I make bold to ask why?' inquired Frankfort, who was standing by Sir Donald, with Du Tell just behind the two.

'Mr. Frankfort, you have no wife, so *you* don't understand.' (Dig on '*you*.') 'But if you had, perhaps you wouldn't like not being able to go out of a morning to the city to transact business without first getting *her* permission what to do.' (Dig on '*her*.')

'Come now, Lizzie, that's too bad, giving the cause away like that!' exclaimed, with a laugh, Mr. Dorland, whom the discussion had attracted. 'You know that I do nothing without your leave. And here is M'Ivor—he can't go across the Divide to inspect a mine for me unless he gets his wife's consent.'

'I assure you it is quite true, Mrs. Dorland,' joined in M'Ivor, who also had been drawn over to the little knot of disputants.

'It is quite true, Mrs. Dorland. It really is. My poor wife is always nervous about my chest, and she insists upon knowing where I am going into the mountains. And the President here always kindly allows me to consult her—indeed about everything. What he has said is quite correct.'

'Ah, and what do you say now, madam?' remarked Sir Donald, with rather a stately air of jocularly and a heavy accent on '*madam*.'

'Oh, I say, Sir Donald,' answered the lady, clearing her throat for a slight laugh—'I say that I don't mind men being a bit humbugs, so long as they are *men*.' (Dig on '*men*.') 'I know William of *old*.' (Dig on '*old*.')

'Ha, ha,' laughed Du Tell, just behind his chief. 'Not bad that. Had them there. And, to be sure, some men *are* humbugs. Strange though, sir, is it not,' he continued, looking at and round Sir Donald and speaking into his ear—'strange how some women seem to lag behind the spirit of the age. Is it not, sir?'

'Very,' said Sir Donald, as he turned round to the maid who was holding the coffee tray for him.

'It seems to be a drawn fight over there, Miss Lamborn,'

remarked Frankfort, sitting down beside his fair constituent. 'But the President's wife seems to be more decided in her views than the President, or, for that matter, than Sir Donald himself. How does your vote go? Or have you not troubled yourself with the question at all?'

'I? Oh, I am waiting till father and mother finish their argument about it. And it is a pretty long argument, I can tell you. Father says that women ought to vote. And mother says that it is all nonsense, she is quite sure of it. And they can't both be right, can they?'

'And so you say nothing?'

'Well, do you know, I sometimes think of what old Dr. Glugg at Dresden used to say to us at school. "Young ladies," he would say, "if you do not know the right answer, do not say the wrong one." And then he would look round the class, through his big glasses, and say with such a lofty air, "Besser gar nichts als was dumm ist zu sagen," so I say nothing for fear of saying a silly thing.'

'You are the only person who would make such a criticism,' said Frankfort, quite sincerely.

'Oh well, let us talk of Brassville and the dear Blocks. Did you not like our lake? Father said that you admired the English trees. Ah, if we only had the Reservoir we need never water the trees at all!'

Here is this skeleton again, thought our politician, and just as the conversation was getting interesting. So for refuge he dived off into the ordinary topics of the day: the famous opera company that was coming out to Excelsior direct from Covent Garden, it was said; the expected return of Lady MacLever after her trip to Europe for her health, and the brilliant receptions she was going to hold when she got back; the recent departure of the English visitors; and whether Mr. Fooks, who had to remain looking after some contracts for the American Ethereal Starch Company, was likely to permanently settle in Excelsior—these and similar topics filled up the short time remaining, till Sir Donald gave the signal for the general break-up of the party by taking his leave, followed by the faithful Du Tell.

The recollections of the evening were pleasant to Frankfort as he mused over them on his way home. Sir Donald

had not impressed him very favourably ; but he was aware of the cynical mood that public life imparted to some men. What a queer creature Du Tell seemed to be ! yet clever too. In fact, he had such an admiration for Sir Donald that he appeared to be unable to see not only the merits of other men, but his own in due proportion. Homely Mrs. Dorland too, with her knitting and the emphatic dig on the point to be emphasised. And yet, with all her common-sense, she could not see the simple fact that women should have a voice in their own government. Strange that so many of the women did not seem to care about their obvious rights. What Eilly Lamborn had mentioned—that her mother said it was all nonsense. And, by the way, there was something pleasant in the conversation of that girl—if it were not for the Reservoir coming in, with its jarring note. He certainly thought that her conversational powers were better than those of most young women whom he met. She interested him some way, and evidently without knowing or specially intending it. And this was partly because she was so natural, but a good deal because the standard of general conversation had fallen off in later times, and her simple, direct way of speaking was the more pleasing in comparison.

Here he followed out in his mind this idea of the decay of conversation. It has been laid down that for conversation it is necessary that one should have knowledge, command of words, imagination, presence of mind, and the resolution not to be overcome by failures ! It certainly was becoming a lost art. You met in society, high and low, talk and small talk, chaff, joking, gossip, scandal, monologue, and all the varieties of boredom—but conversation ? Like most valuable things, it demands some self-sacrifice : you must take as well as give, so as to make it a throwing backward and forward of the ball, as in tennis, not a continuous bowling on one side till the other is knocked out, as in cricket. Then, while willing to take as well as to give, you must *have* some presentable thing to give, when your turn comes. In other words, you must have something to say, some reasonable thought that wants articulate expression ; not only jokes, banter, or mere personalities. In true conversation, too, the

simple rule, so often neglected, must be observed of two not speaking together. One must wait till the other has finished what he had to say. It is surprising how much this obvious rule is forgotten. Many people are incapable of listening ; they can only go on like a dripping tap. And they cannot stand hearing what they disagree with without contradicting it then and there. But, after all, can you have real conversation in a crowd—or only a conflux of words? For true conversation you must have only a few companions, so that each one as he speaks can have the whole party well in hand. Perhaps, indeed, mused Frankfort, the perfection of conversation is between two. But between two or more, to make it the perfect thing, there must be a certain community of feeling between the people, however much diversity of opinion may exist. Was it owing to this that he felt the simple, natural talk of Eilly Lamborn to be so agreeable—so much more so than the formalism of Sir Donald or the obsequious chatter of Du Tell. In fact, the only unpleasant note throughout the whole of his talk with her was the reference to that wretched Reservoir. It came in, too, just when the conversation was taking a pleasant turn. Musing in this manner, while he walked along slowly in the tranquil and composing moonlight, he reached his rooms. One of the first things upon the table that caught his eye was an official-looking letter directed ‘E. F. Frankfort, M.H.R.’ It was a printed circular, signed by Du Tell, calling upon him and all true Liberals to be in their places on the Opposition Benches at the approaching opening of Parliament, in order to support their esteemed leader, Sir Donald.

Soon after the first session of the new Parliament was opened, and the war between the Liberals and the Conservatives was again renewed.

There was no doubt that Mr. Brereton was much weakened by the failure of the Loan. All men are easily satisfied when there is plenty of money to spend. But he had recovered himself a good deal, by the prompt step that he had taken in putting the great question of Woman’s Emancipation to the fore. It was announced as the very first measure of the session, and as Sir Donald and his

friends were pledged to it, there could be only unanimity, it would seem, on the first move in the political campaign. The sole difference on the subject was, that the more advanced people held that the right to sit in Parliament, which was so obviously connected with the right to vote, unless women were to be still considered inferior creatures, should be granted simultaneously with the other ; while the less advanced preferred that it should come after woman's political experience was more developed.

The history of this movement was interesting, as illustrating the nature of political progress in our time. That there are arguments against it as well as for it no intelligent man will deny. But argument had little to do with the advance of the cause in Excelsior. When it was first suggested a few years before, it was regarded as a joke. But soon certain active interests came to realise that it might be a very powerful weapon for whoever could get hold of it ; and some people declared in its favour, with the single-minded and disinterested purpose of having woman's aid in political life to further social reform, and in particular in putting down the curse of drink, and also of general immorality. Mr. Secker, Secretary of the Workers' Association, at first doubted whether the advanced party would be able to direct the woman's vote as absolutely as they did the men's. He ruled in his own home very firmly indeed ; in fact, he was rather a despot there. But he was not so sure of the power of all men to direct their wives as absolutely as he did his. It was rumoured that, when it was first proposed, he used to exclaim irreverently, ' Lord, not in our time ! ' But after a while he came to be satisfied that the women of the Workers, at least, would all go with the men, and that thus the vote that he directed would be doubled. Also, he saw that the thing was going to succeed. He had always inwardly smiled at those stupid people who stuck to their own opinions, and were destitute of the slippery skill to join the winning side at the right time. How foolish they looked, he thought, when success was achieved and the winning ones could laugh at them and their belated ideas. Discarding now all vague and uncertain phrases, such as in the early stages of the discussion he had indulged

in, he would, when his opinion was asked, reply, as he looked with open gaze upon the inquirer—

‘Sir, every Liberal man must be in favour of justice to woman. Come it must unless the sun goes back. Personally, as you do me the honour to ask my opinion, I can only say that I am an enemy to all despotism, mental, political, and domestic.’

Once the question was adopted as an advanced principle, then mere arguments, or mental conclusions, had little more to say in the matter. These could not impede its advance, for it was not by argument that it had got thus far. It must come in with the tide. As a fact, neither the men of the Province wanted it nor yet the women, generally. But the few in favour of it were active, the rest passive. Some wanted it, and fought for what they wanted with personal zeal. But who is to get zealous about remote consequences and general considerations of the public weal? The success of a measure depends not so much upon how many want it as upon how many oppose it. When it was classed as a Liberal, advanced thing, all who wished to rank among Liberals accepted it as a matter of course, as one of the natural heads of the true creed. And if you accept the creed, you must say it right through. Then several who did not believe in it, but who yet could not separate themselves from the winning side, consoled themselves by thinking, or at least saying, that it would make no difference—that it only meant the family vote. Whether on the right side of the blanket or the wrong side did not much matter, it was such a little one. This was not, perhaps, statesmanship, but it was successful. To this must be added the natural feeling that, as some women really wished for it, it was not the part of men to disappoint them. Many men prided themselves on disregarding reasons, figures, and forecasts, and in simply obeying their kindlier impulses. While some political aspirants were influenced, more or less consciously, by this simple consideration: It is certainly coming, wise or foolish. When it does come, what of those who have beforehand condemned half the voters in each electorate? Risk not to be contemplated without emotion! There was safety in supporting it, and no political enmity excited

by adhering to it. Thus it was that this most fundamental change that any community could adopt came about almost as a matter of course in Excelsior; and in that happy Province women were made as powerful in Government as men—in so far as putting black marks on white paper could do it.

Among the few who supported the movement from deep personal conviction of its value was our politician. As the reader knows, he ardently desired the political enfranchisement of women; and he looked forward with pleasurable enthusiasm to fleshing his maiden sword, as the phrase goes, in the legislative arena in defence of the rights of the better half of the human race. But the prospect of making his maiden speech in the House of Representatives was an anxious one. It was a new experience to speak for the first time in the Legislature, and one scarcely less agitating than that earlier one in Scotland, when he had broken down in the attempt to address the College Debating Society. Some curiosity had been excited about his speech, for the Woman's Rights League had, in a leaflet just published, referred in glowing terms to the support that the cause would derive from Professor Frankfort's aid, both moral and intellectual. He devoted some time and thought to preparing his line of argument. And this is needful if a good speech is to be made, however well a man may be informed generally upon his subject. If you have to deliver a choice parcel of goods, it is not enough to have a full warehouse to take from. You must know where to put your hand on the right pieces, and how to pack them, so that they may be easily dealt with and promptly delivered when wanted. Our politician had reasoned out his subject in his mind, and thought over appropriate illustrations, and even some topics of a declamatory character. He prepared to meet the objections that opponents would raise, and which he resolved to candidly admit did call for an answer. As for the hackneyed argument drawn from war, he would scout it with contempt. 'Was the human race to be for ever governed only by ideas drawn from the conditions of brute force,' etc. etc, passed through his mind as the natural form for the reply to take. And note, reader, that the skilful orator can think over and

prepare parts of his speech which not only seem natural and spontaneous when spoken, but which *are* then natural to him. Thus our politician had not only the advantage of believing in the justice of his cause, but he had, by thinking over his subject, generated the necessary amount of enthusiasm to fuse the mere cold conclusions of the intellect, and project them effectively on an audience. He looked forward to coping successfully with adversaries and vindicating the rights, not this time of men, but of women. To be sure, too, it was not unpleasant to feel that, upon this great question, he had the people—or, at least, the people's representatives—with him, and was on the winning side—that cause which Mr. Gladstone once described as having time on its side. Even weak arguments and shallow deliverances loom large through the atmosphere of public favour. How much more, then, should the thoughtful and sincere words of our politician?

Frankfort was thus all prepared for an effective speech as he took his seat on the back Opposition Bench on the evening when the Premier was to move the second reading of the Bill for the Franchisement of Woman. He was soon struck by the listless air that seemed to permeate the House. No one seemed to feel very deeply either the advantages or the disadvantages of the proposed reform. No one appeared to realise, or to trouble about, the vast change that was being taken in hand, or its many-sided as well as remote influences on national life. It was taken as a foregone conclusion that it must come; so there was no fighting against it possible, and no fighting for it necessary; therefore, what was there to talk about?

This view did not commend itself to our politician. He was the more disappointed at it since, as it seemed to him, the question had never been clearly put to the public, nor had the reasons for and against ever been discussed at any election. This was no reason why Parliament should not pass a just measure; but it was a reason why the causes for so doing should be clearly stated and left on record. Else this new principle, grand as it was, would be engrafted on political and social life without ever having been clearly discussed or explained inside Parliament any more than it had been outside.

'I think that I will speak early in the debate, Sir Donald, after the Premier and yourself and a few of the other leaders,' observed our politician to Sir Donald.

'Speak? What for? It is our Bill, and they take it—unless, to be sure, you want to pitch into them wearing our clothes; you only give them importance otherwise,' replied Sir Donald, looking fixedly over Frankfort's head to some Members beyond. He continued, 'If I speak it will only be to show them up, and then for five minutes. There is no fight in it, my good sir.' And he passed down to his place on the front Opposition Bench.

'Ah, that's it—just the point, isn't it, Professor—no fight in it?' he heard a voice saying in his ear, and looking round saw Du Tell sliding past to his place behind his leader, and near where Frankfort sat.

'How he hits the nail; pity he ain't a carpenter,' he continued.

Before Frankfort had time to think over this, to him, new view of the debate the Premier rose to propose his Bill. To make formal speeches was not one of the gifts that Nature had granted to William Brereton; and he was the less at ease in making his speech now, as in reality he had no very fervid convictions about Woman's Rights. He openly declared that he would never consent to their sitting as Members. That he would fight to the last: they should come in over his dead body, if at all. However, he plunged at once into such aspects of the subject as struck his fancy first.

People's will—fiat, he might say. Women, God bless them! better than men anyway, though that was not saying much; yet you shut their mouths—clap a padlock on their tongues politically. Vote? Why not? Heaven knows, I don't. Cut up rough and break things? Wherefore? Property female as well as male. Widows. Spinsters. Fair-play the brightest jewel in the crown. By the way, the late glorious Queen was a woman. He could not be contradicted there. People's voice, mandate. Breeze all fair this trip anyway—right aft—only, as he might say, to rig out the stunsails and bear right in. As he proceeded, he warmed to his subject, and he put strongly the view that

women should get the right to vote, not so much to govern others as to protect themselves from injustice. He referred to 'John Stuart Mill—there in the library—the philosopher of the universe.' Many loudly applauded this aspect of the question, seeming to feel that it reflected credit on all concerned, that the husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers of their enlightened Province should hereafter be compelled by the political power of the women to do justice to their wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters. They cheered with enthusiasm this advanced view of the relations between man and woman. In the midst of the cheering the Premier, who had never felt quite comfortable during his speech, sat down, exclaiming that he knew woman was beyond us and above us. We could not paint the lily, gild the refined gold, or add another hue to the rainbow; but one thing men could do, and that was, give them the vote. (Loud cheers.)

Sir Donald MacLever then rose and briefly addressed the House. He spoke in an imperious, deliberate style that gave his words a greater weight than intrinsically belonged to them. The ordinary man is apt to take self-assertive people at their own estimate of themselves. On the merits of the question he said nothing. The national voice having declared itself, the great Liberal party that he had the honour to lead naturally was its exponent in the Legislature. He would only observe that he, and all his party, rejoiced as each link in the chain of human slavery was broken.

Before the cheers that greeted this Liberal sentiment had died off, he turned to the real point of his speech, which was to denounce Mr. Brereton and the Conservatives for seeking refuge behind the petticoats of their wives, sisters, and daughters from the just vengeance of the people, for their multiplied failures, blunders, and crimes. Having dwelt on this topic for a few minutes, he concluded, saying with a tone of vehemence—

'But, Mr. Speaker, if I may venture to predict—and my predictions are rarely falsified—I would say that the Ministry will soon find that by their female subterfuge they have earned not a pardon from the public, but only a reprieve, and that a brief one. And none will join in their condemnation with more enthusiasm than the very women

behind whom they so shabbily try to shelter themselves from public indignation.'

This attack upon the Government promptly brought up the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty, Minister for Education and Public Knowledge and the Post Office. He was a polished man, but he loved the war of words. He began by asking, in a mild tone and sarcastic manner, whether the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition was possessed by such a whole-souled devotion to the rights of either men or women that he considered that he held an absolute monopoly of all generous measures, whether behind petticoats or before; so that no noble thing could expect to see the light unless it was first nurtured in the gray, cold bosom of the Honourable Member for Land's End? (Loud cheers from the Government Benches welcomed this inquiry, and Sir Donald smiled himself, with more satisfaction than he would have felt for any mere jovial sentiment.) After enlarging upon this aspect of the subject, the Minister went on to his next topic, which was to declare that it was as well known as the Post Office clock in Miranda that the honourable gentleman took up Female Suffrage not because he believed in it, not because his heart warmed—Heaven save the mark!—to that noble principle, but because he feared women's sovereign and avenging hand at the ballot-box. In support of this view he declaimed at some length, and indignantly asked how it was that the honourable gentleman, though so concerned about the links in the chain of human slavery, had never sought to touch this one during his long term of office? If the honourable gentleman was once safely in power again, when might they expect to hear the cheering ring of that avenging stroke that would free their sisters? They might expect it when the Day of Doom arrived—a time when the Honourable Member would feel quite at home. After dwelling with increasing fervour upon this aspect of the question for some time, the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty suddenly faced round at the scoffing figure who sat opposite, enjoying his eloquence, and extending in a dramatic manner his right arm towards the enemy, wound up by exclaiming that he, for one, was prepared to meet the honourable gentleman opposite in any manner or description of

encounter that he might desire, physical, mental, moral, or even spiritual, either inside the House or outside, so long only as it was above-board—a qualification which he trusted would not absolutely decide the honourable gentleman to decline the encounter.

Renewed ministerial cheers greeted this peroration, and Sir Donald threw his head back, this time with an unmistakable smile mantling over his countenance. Mr. M'Grorty had his attention so much occupied by the task of hurling defiance at the Leader of the Opposition that he had no time left for the consideration of the Bill itself. The first person so far, not excepting the Premier himself, who attempted to deal with the question on its merits was old Mr. Brandreth, the Member for the remote pastoral district of Towrie, which his critics generally alluded to as the Sheep Walk. He was commonly regarded as an old Tory, so that the mere fact of his saying a thing was apt to put Liberals against it. And people often attach as much weight to who says a thing as to what is said. Thus it was considered a sufficient answer to Mr. Brandreth's best points to ask him in a jocular manner how many sheep were on the rolls for his district. He seemed to be a conscientious old man, but to be overborne by the general feeling in favour of what were considered more enlightened views than his own. He spoke, therefore, in an apologetic tone, and began by hoping he would not be misunderstood when he opposed the second reading of the Bill. He expressly disclaimed the slightest want of sympathy or respect for woman. But, he asked, was it intended that woman should do the same public work as men? If not, was it quite fair that she should have the same voice in directing it? He tried to quote some figures to show that a greater number of women would be able to vote than men; but was baffled by indignant inquiries from several Members whether they were not human beings, few or many? Here he looked awkwardly round the House, and rubbed his sleeve across his mouth in a nervous way that he had; and after a rather long pause said in as positive a manner as he could command that he had never denied that they were human beings. He only wanted to say that there would be more women to vote than men. To the cries of the

question, 'Well, what then?' he did not seem to have any answer ready, so he only looked towards the questioners in a disconcerted manner, and repeated the inquiry in a bewildered tone, 'What then? why, that's what I want to know!' Amid the ironical cheers that the situation provoked, he managed to jerk out something about the universal experience of mankind; who were to do the rough work of Government and the fighting? whether women wanted it? and so on; and at last sat down, amid some confusion and merriment.

This feeble demonstration against the Bill brought up Mr. Slater Scully, the popular Member for Biggleswade, not so much to defend the measure as to denounce the people who opposed it. He said that he was ready to make every allowance for his honourable friend—for so, despite his belated views, he would still term him—considering the sluggish nature of the animals he represented. It was just as well to hear what could be said on the other side. It only showed, in its blank absurdity, the nature of the argument against justice to women. This, then, he exclaimed, was the answer to the cogent reasoning by which the Bill had been supported on all sides. It was asked, Were women to rule the country? But he would ask another question, Were women to be treated as babies, lunatics, or criminals? Let any man lay his hand upon his heart and answer that question. His honourable friend had asked, What about the home? He asked, What about the home? too. Or rather, What about the harem? for some people wanted to keep the homes of the people of this noble Province down to the level of the harem. They, on the contrary, wanted freedom in the homes, not slavery by the fireside. They must purify politics, and how could they do it better than by the divine touch of women? He would invoke as angels of deliverance those whom his honourable friend would doom to the dreary routine of the nursery and the scullery. (Mr. Brandreth—'No! no!') His honourable friend said No! no! But it was a world-resounding Yes! yes! After some further general remarks, Mr. Slater Scully came to his peroration. He observed in a solemn tone that the hour of deliverance was at hand. The Sun of Progress was rising

fast, and his penetrating rays would soon search out all murky recesses. The belated insects of the night had better creep away, and that betimes, into the few remaining dark and damp holes in which they could find shelter from the intolerable brightness of the ethereal rays.

Loud cheers followed the honourable gentleman's fervid appeal. There was a stir in the House, and then a general settling down, as if further argument was now unnecessary. And cries of 'Question! Question!' to close the fruitless discussion arose. The House did not appear disposed to go on with the debate. It was understood that the Bill would be carried on the voices. There was no party interest to satisfy, and therefore there was no fight in it, as Sir Donald had said. Still, our politician felt that much remained to be said if the subject was to be put in its true light. He was aware that the public outside were not so unanimous about the new rights of woman as the House seemed for the moment to be. And even the unanimity of the House was much on the surface, and arose a good deal from the way in which, in popular assemblies, a minority when overborne are apt to acquiesce in the successful cause, or at least to be silent. Was it not the duty of a representative of the people to put the arguments for this far-reaching reform before the thinking public? It was plain that the true reasons for woman's claims had not yet been analysed or enforced. And poor Mr. Brandreth's points, though so feebly put, still had not been answered by any one. It certainly was disheartening to be full of fervour on a question when, apparently, no one wanted to be convinced, and when there was no forcible statement of the adverse view to be grappled with. Such conditions damp the enthusiasm of a speaker.

Still, nothing daunted, he stood up and claimed the attention of Mr. Speaker, and as that honourable gentleman announced 'Mr. Frankfort,' the name of the new Member attracted attention, and not only ensured silence for a maiden speech, but evoked some good-natured 'Hear, hear's' for his encouragement. This kindly reception, which is always accorded a first effort, reassured him, though he had been disconcerted when he rose by Du Tell half rising from

his seat, craning his head towards him, and saying in a stage whisper, 'You need not trouble, Professor: the numbers are up'; while, at the same moment, Sir Donald looked slowly round with an aspect that was certainly not inviting to enthusiasm for any cause. But on he went, and soon got interested in his subject. While stating forcibly the arguments for the enfranchisement of woman, he admitted the magnitude of the change, in its remoter perhaps more than in its immediate consequences, and he devoted some attention to answering the objections that Mr. Brandreth had indicated without clearly stating or enforcing them. The sentiment which he had thought over about men not being always governed by brute force came in naturally, in reply to the old gentleman's reference to fighting, a topic so hackneyed in relation to Woman's Rights. He made a strong point of the fact that society left numbers of single women to work for and look after themselves, and gave authentic figures on this point. He dealt with effect on the influence women would have in elevating politics and introducing the element of conscience and morality into them; while on her behalf he disconnected the present movement from the complete Socialist programme, which contemplates the gradual decline of the functions of the mother and the duties of the home, and the substitution of a new method of social life in their stead. As to the general arguments drawn from the personal feebleness of women in their inability to cope with men in national struggles, they could happily, in their young province, be postponed to the future. He concluded a rather full examination of the question, which the House listened to with commendable attention, by an eloquent tribute to the spirit of the age which was every day minimising the power of mere brute force and elevating that of reason, the moral sense, and the kindlier feelings of mankind.

There was considerable applause when he had concluded, and it was generally felt that he had made an effective speech. But there was a general whisper of surprise along the Opposition Benches at his not making any reference to what seemed to be the main point that the debate had evolved, namely, the conduct of the Government in taking up the subject at all. He seemed to have forgotten this as

much as the Honourable Mr. M'Grorty had forgotten the Bill. Still, many Members felt that he was the speaker who had brought the real merits of the question before them. Hence that happened which is not unusual in Parliamentary discussions. The debate took a new turn. The House, when he rose, seemed to be tired of the question, and only anxious to come to the foregone conclusion. But now a fresh interest in it appeared to be developed, and an interest that demanded a fuller consideration of both sides of the controversy. As a fact, only a few Members had any strong convictions in favour of the Bill ; while some, who were opposed to it, had felt themselves overborne by apparent unanimity of the House. But the speech of our politician, by the very fact of his dealing with adverse arguments, had shown that there was much in the question calling for debate, and for limitation as to how far the reform ought at present to go. We will not say, as was said of the country parson's sermon on the existence of the Deity, that he raised doubts as well as satisfied them ; but nevertheless his speech had operated like the letting-out of waters. Those who opposed the Bill on principle took courage, and urged their objections with a new-found boldness. The women champions also roused themselves for this new aspect of the fray, and the evil designs of the Ministry were, for the moment, lost sight of in the merits of the question itself. The more the matter was discussed, the more it seemed to want discussion. One or two Members from country districts declared that they felt themselves placed in a condition of difficulty, owing to the fact that the opinions of their constituents were nearly equally divided upon the question ; while some other Members, who were generally rather silent men, went with much practical force into the subject, generally, however, ending by supporting the Bill—rather unwillingly, as they admitted.

But arguments no more alter party feeling in the House of Representatives of Excelsior than they do in older Parliaments, and before long the debate naturally worked round again to the conduct of the Government in taking up Woman's Rights at all. The battle now raged fiercely round this point of attack, and, as the more pronounced

friends of woman were on the Opposition side, laudation of the Bill was mixed with dire invective against Mr. Brereton, who sat looking as jolly as ever, and occupied himself with making happy shots of interjection whenever the enemy gave him an opening.

As the renewed attack in this direction showed so strong a development, it occurred to Sir Donald that an amendment, stating that while this House was determined to do justice to woman, it declined to accept it in the discreditable manner in which it was now presented to it, might succeed. This, he observed to Slater Scully, Du Tell, and a few other friends near, would at once oust the Government, which, as he observed, was a matter of more importance to the country than even the immediate Liberation of Woman. When the Liberal party came in, they could pass the Emancipation in a more complete form, including also the right to sit in Parliament. Galt Birnie, the young and useful Member for Crick Creek, was put up to speak against time, while Du Tell went round their side of the House to ascertain (entirely on his own account, and without any reference to Sir Donald) whether the friends of woman would agree to this temporary postponement of the Reform, in order to oust the Government. He mentioned confidentially that he knew that if they would accept this proposal they might consider the admission of women to sit in Parliament, as well as to vote, as good as in the Bill that the new Government would at once introduce. As he crept along at the back of the benches, from Member to Member, with head anxiously inclined and keen, inquiring gaze, asking each Member for his support, he found that he was making good way, especially with those who felt that the best part of their speeches had been their attack upon the Ministry. But some were too deeply pledged to the principle of woman's freedom to vote against it in any shape, while others wanted to know what Professor Frankfort would do, as he had been recognised in the Woman's Rights League manifesto as one of their representative men, and he had shown such earnest interest in the cause that night. Were he to oppose such an amendment as endangering woman's cause, what would the Woman's League outside say if they were to support it? Du Tell

felt the force of this, and hastily slipped back from the end of the benches to his seat near Frankfort.

'We have it this time, Professor, safe as houses. It's all right. Sure to win the double event,' he whispered.

'What's all right? Double event—what?' inquired our politician.

'Put out this untrustworthy lot on the Government Benches, and then make Woman's Emancipation complete.'

'I don't understand you, Du Tell. There is nothing before us but the second reading of the Bill.'

'Ah, but there will be soon if we hold together'; and Du Tell explained to him the nature of the proposed amendment.

'And does Sir Donald approve of that?' asked our politician.

'Well, you see, I am just inquiring round what they think. But I have little doubt—indeed, I know that I can get him to speak again, and support the amendment when it is moved.'

'Why, I could not agree to that!' exclaimed our politician. 'I want to see the Bill pass, and pass now. If such an amendment were to be moved, I must speak against it.'

'Speak against it!' replied Du Tell, whispering his loudest and clearest, and in his most measured tones, while he looked in an uneasy way, apparently at Frankfort's waistcoat pocket. 'Speak against it, when I tell you, between ourselves, that he would be sure to speak for it!'

'I am truly sorry, then,' replied our politician, 'not to be able to support it.'

Du Tell had already some idea that our politician was an impracticable sort of fellow, so he only raised his eyes with a baffled air as he observed, as a last hope—

'But his Bill would put women straight into Parliament, as well as give the vote. Do you particularly want to keep the old Tories in?'

Frankfort felt the awkwardness of differing from his party. Still, the whole thing appeared so clear to him. He was asked to defeat a measure of great public value in order to get the Ministry out of office, upon what even its pro-

posers would admit to be a mere subterfuge. The promise of another Bill might or might not be effectually carried out. And as to the added bait of its including women sitting in Parliament, which was thrown in on the spur of the moment, though of course that must come in due time, he was inclined to think it would be better taken up by itself after the first step in reform was secured. The noble principle of the elevation of woman seemed all at once to become involved in an atmosphere of trickery, insincerity, and mere selfish purposes. And how could he agree to this after having earnestly urged the House in his speech to pass the Bill? So, facing the questioner as directly as he could a man who would only look at him askance, he replied :

‘No, I really could not vote for it, Du Tell. I am very sorry. But I want to see this Bill pass, and pass now. I am pledged to it.’

Frankfort’s decisive tone sent away the perplexed strategist in despair to his master. The countenance of Sir Donald fell when he heard of his rebellion. Had he then looked into the sweetest dairy there would have been small hope for the cream that day. He calculated for a few moments, and then determined that it would not do to risk the defeat that the defection of this impracticable politician and those who would follow him might entail. So he told Du Tell to beckon to Galt Birnie to stop, and to let the Bill be passed at once on the voices. Nothing more was to be said of Du Tell’s mission round the House. In fact, it was to be ignored. The Bill passed in triumph, the few declared opponents not caring to call for a division.

Our politician felt pleased that the evening’s work had ended so well, though it had begun in an unsatisfactory manner. The great cause of justice to woman had triumphed. He was glad that he had spoken, and he felt that he had spoken well. It was the right thing to have a full discussion of so large a question. As for Sir Donald, an instinctive distaste that he had felt from the first for our politician was certainly not mitigated by the events of the evening. His dissent was responsible for the failure of the project to defeat the Government by the amendment that was to be suddenly sprung upon them. Clever though MacLever was, he was

not such an expert at clearing away the look of ill-humour from his countenance at the proper time as one would have expected an experienced politician to be. Secker Secretary was quite a master of that art compared with Sir Donald. Though he was anxious to conceal his dissatisfaction, there was an unmistakable air of vexation about him as he looked in the direction of, rather than at, Frankfort, when he passed him going out, and observed—

‘If you had not got up, Professor, we could have taken the division hours ago. We have lost an evening over it.’

‘But surely, Sir Donald, it is a question worthy of discussion,’ answered our politician.

‘I thought that you wanted the Bill passed,’ drily remarked Sir Donald.

‘Certainly I did.’

‘Well, it could have been passed before dinner if we had kept quiet; unless we wanted to glorify the Government over it—or Professor Frankfort.’

Sir Donald then promptly passed on out of hearing of any reply that might be coming. This was a habit of his when he had said anything that he meant to be decisively cutting.

‘Do you know, sir, I am thinking,’ remarked Du Tell in an undertone as he hurried up beside him—‘I am thinking that we have not made much by the change at Brassville. Meeks would have agreed to anything. Safer man!’

‘Much,’ responded Sir Donald.

This, however, was not the general feeling. Frankfort, as he walked among the Members who were standing about after the House had risen, received many congratulations, especially from the ardent champions of woman, who hailed him as their spokesman. It made his heart glad to feel that his first effort in Parliament had been to further the cause of humanity and progress. As he passed along one of the corridors he became sensible that some one was quietly following him. He looked round, and there was Walter Crane sidling along, looking straight before him, with the mildest expression possible on his countenance, bearing the bag of M’Grorty, which that gentleman had just given him.

He had been an attentive listener to the debate from the gallery. In a moment Wally's cap was off and his bald, venerable head bowing down towards the flags.

'Ah, Crane! You there? Why, have you been here all the evening?'

'To be sure, your Honer, in the back seats there beyond. Haven't I to wait for His Excellency's bag?'

'Oh, to be sure, yes! And what did you think of the debate, Crane?'

'Very fine speech your Honer made. All the people about praising your Honer. Thanks be to Heaven!'

'Why, then, Crane, are you one of our side? You stand up for Woman's Rights too?' said our politician, gratified to find enlightened principles permeating, even though slowly, the humblest ranks.

'I, your Honer?'

'Yes, what do you say about it, Crane?'

'I say, your Honer? Why, then, to be sure, I say that the likes of me look to what your Honer and the other honourable gentlemen say and the wisdom of Parliament to tell us poor folks—to explain these things like to us, so that we may come to understand them. Yes, your Honer, that we may come to understand them,' said Crane, casting his eyes meekly from one side to the other, as if he were looking all round for information on the subject.

Walter Crane, as has been said, made it a fixed rule of his public life never to express any opinions about politics, except on Sundays to his most private and select circle of acquaintances at his nephew's cottage down in Grubb Lane. There he used to declare the most profound contempt for Woman's Rights in every possible aspect. For, truth to say, his own experiences had been rather unfortunate with the other sex, and not such as to conduce to an elevated view of their mission in life.

'What nonsense, Mick,' he would say in a self-assertive manner that would have astonished any one who had only seen him bending low about the Water Bureau—'what nonsense, Mick, this woman's rights and privileges and things—cock and hen business for managing any decent man's poultry-yard.'

'Why, then, ole man, which do you go for—cocks or hens?' Mick would cheerfully inquire.

'Either, me boy, would be better than the two trying it on together, and the hens flappin' their wings about and trying to crow as if they were cocks.'

This figurative way of putting the question was much admired by the company in Grubb Lane, which consisted wholly of the male sex. Mick was unmarried, and Crane, ever since he had become a widower, never willingly was in the same room with a woman, except when his official duties required him to conduct some fair constituent on business to His Excellency the Minister. Once he had to show the way to a deputation from the Woman's Rights League. Though groaning inwardly in spirit, he maintained a placid countenance and bowed his lowest as he led on. But the next Sunday he relieved his feelings in Grubb Lane by sundry vigorous criticisms on the *personnel* of the party that were immensely enjoyed by the company there, though they do not admit of being set down here.

But outside of Grubb Lane Walter Crane was dumb and inexplicable as the Sphinx upon this and all other public questions. So he only repeated to our politician, 'Yes, your Honer, we looks to the like of your Honer and to the wishdom of Parliament to fix us up in our minds like on all these great questions'; and with his old bow he disappeared down the steps with the M'Grorty bag, which was full of the Bills designed to exercise this wisdom for the next few months.

As our politician followed on towards the street, he heard some hurried footsteps coming on behind, and felt the touch of a hand on his shoulder as he looked round. It was the hand of Mr. Secker, and walking arm-in-arm with him was Mons. Froessolecque, the editor of the *Sweet-Brier*. They apparently had no time to lose, so they pressed on, and in passing Secker Secretary could only hastily observe, as he looked round at Frankfort:

'Thank you, Professor—thank you. Noble! noble!'

A stranger who heard this might have been in doubt to what it referred. But could the man who had just delivered a successful speech on Woman's Rights be? Frankfort was

quite pleased to think that an experienced politician like Mr. Secker thought so highly of his speech.

When our politician reached the quiet seclusion of his rooms and stretched himself in his chair to enjoy the bedtime pipe, his retrospect of this, to him, eventful day was certainly pleasurable. He had undoubtedly spoken with effect. He was recognised as the exponent of the just claims of woman. Many men in the Legislature of Excelsior felt a satisfaction in honestly acting up to their principles, but none more deeply or sincerely than our politician. After all, there was something worth living for, even in this much-aspersed public life. What could be nobler than to fight for justice to your fellow-creatures? What he had done that evening was at least one good work scored up to the credit of his life's labour—completed, beyond the power of envious Fate. Certainly the episode of the proposed amendment and Du Tell's efforts to get him to agree to it was unpleasant. But, looking back upon the incident, he felt quite satisfied that he was right. Were questions that concerned directly the happiness and welfare of men and women to be made mere counters in the political game? As he lay in his bed, the sour visage of Sir Donald seemed to appear before him. Grim-looking customer he is, to be sure, he thought. However, what need he care for him? He wanted nothing from him. Secker was certainly complimentary about his speech, and he was a power in politics—deep man too. He did not know Froessolecque, who was going away with him, except by appearance; but Secker was said to have great influence over him, so perhaps the *Sweet-Brier* would be complimentary too. As for himself, our politician was conscious that his object in public life was to be of use to his country. So he sank to sleep a happy man.

It would be vain to deny that the next morning he opened the daily papers with some trepidation. Would they give a good report of his speech? Would they praise him or belittle him? Would there be any mention of the contemplated amendment that was to throw out the Government by the temporary sacrifice of the Bill? It is an agitating thing to the beginner to see his name, his

own particular proper name, flaring in print, the subject of observation and comment by that great impersonal power, the Press, and through it made, as the beginner thinks, the common talk of all men. A great power, truly! Some one gets hold of a machine, by means of which he can scatter broadcast among millions of men whatever he pleases to put upon the flying sheets. He may be wise or foolish, judicious or the reverse, acquainted with the facts or not acquainted, nay, he may be a good man or a bad man; but anyway he has got the machine, and by it he can plant in print what he likes in every home in the land. Overnight he makes his machine put upon the white, innocent paper, 'Smith is an unmistakable rogue,' and before the morning is well advanced hundreds of thousands of Smith's brother-men read that fact (as it is termed). Smith may not be a rogue at all, but nevertheless the world is well assured of the fact about Smith before the day is over. But has Smith no remedy? Yes, he has a remedy. Society says to him, 'Dear Citizen Smith, if, as you say, you are not an unmistakable rogue, and if you have money, you can bring an action against the man with the machine, and in a year or so, if the judge makes no mistake and the jury don't disagree, you can have a verdict stating that you are not an unmistakable rogue—to leave as a soothing legacy to your children.' Such is the remedy of Citizen Smith.

Our politician, however, had little cause to complain of the press. The *Rising Sun* congratulated him upon his effective treatment of the Woman's question, while it expressed surprise at his making no reference to the peculiar position of the Government in dealing with the question at all. The *News Letter* declared that Mr. Frankfort's speech was the one of the debate, so far as treatment of the subject was concerned. The little unpleasantness about the amendment did not seem to have spread outside the Parliamentary circle, so far as these papers were concerned. He had not seen the *Sweet-Brier* yet. He did not know much about it, except that it was generally understood that the editor, Mons. Froessolecque, was a friend of both Secker and Du Tell. But then Du Tell made it a point of business to know everybody. Sir Donald himself always nodded to

the editor in the street in a rather less abrupt manner than he did to other people ; and Lady MacLever used, before she went to England, occasionally to invite him to her 'At Homes.' But she would explain to her select circle that at these public entertainments she did not mind what Calibans she asked—the wilder the better. She rather liked the *mauvais goût*, she said, and plenty of it. And yet all that was against poor Froessolecque was that years ago, in his native Paris, he was accused of being one of a party of patriots who attempted, in the cause of freedom, to blow up the Prince President of the Republic with a destructive bomb. To avoid difficulty he fled to Excelsior, where he had lived ever since, his destructive tendencies being gradually mitigated, and now only displayed in attempts to destroy the enemies of Freedom there by explosive articles in the *Sweet-Brier*.

The tone that the paper was recently taking was believed, by those who were behind the scenes, to be owing to the fact that Secker Secretary was becoming more and more dissatisfied with the prospects of getting his Bill to Classify the Workers adopted by the Government. It was quite a question whether he would not throw over the Government altogether and attach himself to Sir Donald. However, this is what our politician read when he opened the *Sweet-Brier*:

The work done in the House of Representatives last night was more than noble. *Plus royaliste que le Roi*. Woman's fetters were knocked off. Poor Mr. Brandreth, with his belated mumblings about home life ! We trust that they are acceptable to the sheep of Towrie. They certainly are not so to the men, much less to the women, of Excelsior ! The feature of the evening was Sir Donald MacLever's crushing and irrefragable indictment of the Ministry for seeking to shelter themselves from the indignation of an at-length-awakened people by parading before them a Liberal measure that they had no right to contaminate with their soiled touch. His denunciation of hiding behind petticoats was grand, and will long ring in the ears of the people of Excelsior. Professor Frankfort, the lately-retuned Member for Brassville, also spoke at some length, but seemed to miss the real point of the debate—whether a Government by appropriating, and that dishonestly, a Liberal measure should be held thereby to atone for a lengthened career of political turpitude. That Brereton and Company ought to have been kicked out by an indignant amendment is indisputable. It was freely

rumoured in the House among Members that this would have been done only for the pusillanimity or treachery that was suddenly and unexpectedly developed in a certain quarter that shall at present be nameless. *Au revoir.*

Pusillanimity or treachery! Could that refer to him? It really looked rather like it. How unjust! And how could the *Sweet-Brier* people have heard of the whispered conversation between Du Tell and himself? Then Secker, who was known to have influence with the editor, had praised his speech. Noble, he called it. The paragraph surely could not point to him. At any rate, he had done the right thing, let them slander him as they pleased. This was a consolation. Whether it was sufficient to quite deaden the sting of a public accusation of cowardice or treachery must be left undetermined, or left, at least, for each reader to determine for himself. But what was his surprise and indignation when he opened the *Sweet-Brier* the next morning to read as follows:—

POLITICAL ON DIT

Suspicious—very. It is, we regret to say, positively rumoured in political circles that the failure to move the righteous Want of Confidence Amendment on the second reading of the Woman's Emancipation Bill was a good deal owing to a questionable influencing of several members of the Opposition by the Honourable and newly-returned Member for Brassville. It is positively, but we hope inaccurately, stated that that honourable gentleman, though sitting on the Opposition Benches, came on this critical occasion, for some unknown reason, to the rescue of the Government that he opposes! All sincere friends of the learned gentleman, who are, like ourselves, anxious that his escutcheon should be without stain in this early portion of his political career, will be anxious to have an explicit contradiction of this unpleasant and, we trust, erroneous suspicion.

‘Just look at that; it is really monstrous! I will write to them at once!’ our politician exclaimed to Myles Dillon when that gentleman called in on his way down town to have a laugh about the paragraph, which had also caught his eye on looking over the *Sweet-Brier*.

‘I will contradict it at once,’ he repeated.

‘Do nothing of the sort, my noble M.H.R.,’ said Dillon.

‘Why not? The thing is so untrue. I spoke to no one but Du Tell—to answer his question.’

‘That’s all very right, Mr. Frankfort. This thing *is* untrue. But as you get hardened things may be put in these paragraphs that are not untrue. If you contradict now and not then, where are you?’

‘But is a man to have no remedy, no protection against slanders like this?’

‘My dear boy, if your character is not strong enough for the place it’s not my fault,’ remarked Myles Dillon, looking round the room in his easy-going manner.

‘But I called in to say,’ he continued, ‘that I want to ask myself to dinner here with you this evening.’

‘I hope you will come; I want so much to have a talk with you.’

‘Yes, that’s what I want too; I want to cut up your speech a bit. None of the papers criticise it properly.’

‘All right. I will be ready for you. Dinner and arguments will be both waiting for you; and I will do nothing about this rascally paper.’

‘No, don’t touch the *Sweet-Brier*,’ replied Dillon, as he left for the hospital. ‘Admire it from afar. Scent it on the gale. Masterly inaction. Remember the motto of the old University—“They say. What do they say? Let them say.”’

That evening, when the two friends met, Myles Dillon soon began his comments on ‘the event of the debate about the women,’ as he, in a half-jocular manner, described our politician’s speech.

‘Ye did it well, Edward Fairlie, they all say. Like the Frenchman with his cooking, it is a pity that you haven’t got a piece of solid meat, as ye can make so much out of a nettle-top.’

‘Well, I know you of old, Myles. You remember our discussions in the walks in Scotland. You are a stickler for your side, Myles, right or wrong. But they do all say that I made a good speech.’

‘Oh yes, you are all right now, with the crowd cheering behind you. Wait till something turns up that you *don’t* believe in, and then what about your personal conscience, my noble M.P.? Faith, you’ll want a political one then.’

And Myles gave a deep pull at his cigar, followed by something like a sigh. Without noticing this last presentiment of his friend, our politician only replied :

‘At any rate, Dillon, I do believe in it. I would have laughed, though, to have heard you get up and pitch into the question in your old style. You would have got into a row over it, contradicting them.’

‘Well, that’s just where an outsider like me can look into subjects in a fairer manner than you fellows who are in the jostle. Sitting on the hedge—you know the rest. But then speaking in public is not a trick that I have learnt. But,’ Myles continued, with a grave, resolute look upon his face, ‘I am going to write a book about it. And publish it too.’

‘Bravo, Myles! That’s the style!’ exclaimed Frankfort, laughing. Send me an early copy, and I’ll have it reviewed in the *Sweet-Brier—The New Woman Question*, by Myles Dillon, F.R.C.S.I. Advance copy for Mons. Froessolecque. With the author’s compliments.’

‘Now, ye needn’t laugh, Edward Fairlie, for I am going to print it. But it won’t be that way at all. It would not do to give my name, you see. No, it will be this way :

“*The Man and Woman Question. By a Human Brute.*”’

‘A Human Brute ; what’s the sense in that?’ inquired Frankfort.

‘Why, I’d be going, ye see, to tell some straight truths ; so I’d begin by not taking too poetical a stand at the start.’

‘Well, there’s some sense in that, if you are going on in the old-fashioned style that you used to.’

‘That’s what I am saying, Edward Fairlie. I’d begin in the introductory part, you know, fair and square, something like this—

“I am a Brute. I know it. But I am an honest brute, and an honest brute may at times tell more truth than a deluded or equivocating man.”’

‘That’s right, Myles. Good start clears the ground. Ought to make every one comfortable to begin with,’ said his companion with a cheerful laugh. He rather enjoyed the idea of the new book.

‘Very well, now; just let me get on. I would divide my volume into two parts. I will just run over the headings. Part I. would be, “To my noble brothers, the men.” Part II., “To my dear sisters, the women.” The men I would tackle first.

“My noble brothers,” I would say,’ continued Dillon, lying on his back upon the sofa, cigar in hand and gazing up to the ceiling—

“My noble brothers, who are so anxious for your sisters to share government with you, I would like to respectfully ask you one simple question, Do you really mean it now?” And I’d make the printer put “mean” in big black letters—or italics for the matter of that, whichever he had handy. Then I would have several columns of figures, returns, statistics, decimals and all complete, showing how there would be more women available to vote than men at any one time or place. Then I would go on:

“My heroic brethren, do you really intend to hand over Government to women? Do you propose to do all the rough work of life, all the outdoor political work, maintain the public peace, control the criminals, man the fleets, explore the wilds, but to have women direct how it is to be done? Or do you mean that your dear sisters are only to vote as you tell them, and that you are feeding your women on a sham?”

‘Then I would have a scientific chapter. It would go this way:

“Effect of Woman’s Suffrage on a Full-grown Nation.—At present one difficulty about democracy—The Chasm between Political Life and Social Life: this intensified when you enact that in the political world women are the same as men, while in the social they remain different—Makes Political Government to fit less than ever with Social Facts—Infant Communities can do this: they could give every child a vote and still get on. But in a full-grown nation manhood suffrage could not continue to carry woman suffrage on its back. In time it will have enough to do to carry itself.”

‘Next, the argument would be varied skilfully like this:—I would suppose one individual, John Bull sort of shop-

keeping fellow, like that grumpy old Silas Hardegg down the street there, and I would go on to apostrophise him :

“ My worthy trader, I know that your soul is bound up in hard money. You think that you will become bankrupt if soft money triumphs, and that instead of ruling like an autocrat your prosperous wheat and flour business, you will have to go cap in hand to beg your own bread. You support the Woman's Rights man. But are you ready to see hard money wrecked by the soft voices of the amiable females that inhabit your handsome villa being given against your own manly vote? Or would you not scout the mere idea of their crossing you in business? And if you would, where, my noble descendant of John Bull, is your sincerity in supporting woman's vote? ”

‘ I would expand this a bit, and then I would vary the tack a little :

“ My thoughtful brethren, if the political sphere is truly one for women, they must sit in Parliament and in the Executive in proportion to their numbers. Now, my brethren, do you mean this? ” (Note to the printer—“ this ” in black letters as before.) “ Are you willing to see your Parliament half filled with women? Or are you only humbugging your dear sisters by conceding to them the hollow gift of being able to hang about the sawdust of the political circus, but never to mount to the boxes? ” ’

‘ You are like one of your own patients, Myles—doing very nicely. I only wish we had you in the House. It would be fun to hear M'Grorty and Slater Scully denouncing your fallacies, and denouncing you too for talking so. We would have some sport over it anyway.’

‘ Oh yes, Teddy. Sport at my expense. But I am not ambitious. That's why I won't give my name to the book. But let me get on now.

‘ I would then have a chapter headed, “ Argument from the Oppression of Women. ” It would begin : “ My noble brothers, some of you say that women must have votes to protect them from the injustice of man. Brute though I am, I do assure you that I think nothing is nobler than the voluntary deference of man, the stronger, to woman, the weaker. But, my high-minded brethren, when you boast

that man is going to be compelled to do right by reason of woman's power to make him, I humbly conceive that the situation is quite altered. Your law is to enable women to force men to do them justice, which otherwise the men would deny them. How is that for common-sense? Were this really possible, then I fear that the position of man, however amiably he acted, would become rather contemptible, and true women would cease to respect him."

'So that is your sage answer to the oppression of woman for ages,' remarked Frankfort.

'No, I would deal with that in a fresh chapter with headings—"Evils of Dark Ages remedied in civilised countries already, without woman's vote. Continuous improvement now going on by action of men alone. Are laws now unjust to women?" and so on, Teddy, at great length, and in an exhaustive and exhausting manner.'

'Well, get on, Myles. I am really getting a bit tired of your headings and divisions. Come on to your Part II.—The Women Themselves.'

'Now that's just it; you get tired of it, because it don't agree with you. I'll come to the women directly, but I must have a last chapter for my moral friends who want woman's vote for temperance and other good things.

"My moral and temperance brothers, I know that you are eager for woman's vote to advance your good objects and make laws suppressing drink and other bad things. I admire your purpose; I sympathise with your object. Indeed I do. But, my moral men, have a care lest you are counting without your host. Brute though I be, I joyfully own that the genus woman is better than the genus man. But it remains to be proved by experience whether the species political woman will be much better than the species political man."

'I would put it in that general sort of way, you observe,' continued Myles Dillon, 'and then I would wind up with the men something like this:

"Finally, my worthy brothers, I come back to my first question, Do you really mean it? Are you ready to divide your power with your dear sisters? Or is it all really a huge make-believe, partly conscious and partly unconscious?

If the latter, then, my worthy brothers, it seems to an honest brute that you are in the sad case of men who, in order to keep popular, accept a revolution in the hope and belief that it will prove a sham.”

‘Very fine indeed, Myles—striking, if not logical,’ said Frankfort, laughing. ‘You have settled the men, anyway. But how are you going to answer your sisters when they ask to be treated as human beings?’

‘I answer them in Part II.; but it is so exhaustive in its character that I can only give you the headings—like the “Argument” that you see put before great poems—on this wise :

“PART II

“THE ARGUMENT

“Brute sympathises with women’s wrongs from man, and also from Nature. Honours their aspirations for a higher life. Questions whether it will be found in politics. Right to the political vote? If it is to be exercised independently of husbands and fathers, of no use, unless women sit in Parliament in proportion to their numbers, and share the government. If husbands and fathers are not to be trusted to vote for their wives and daughters, no more can they be to legislate for them. Brute questions whether composite Legislatures and Governments of men and women will be a fact in nations. Will woman’s dignity be raised by being admitted into politics only as an inferior race, denied share in higher duties. The world’s idea, thus far in its history, of a division of the work of life between man and woman is more honourable to the latter. Cannot expect to combine under the new system power over men and also the consideration hitherto extended to the want of it.

“Hard case of women who cannot marry considered. Sincere sympathy for them, but also wonder at the vast field of work for women, now willingly handed over by them to men or left neglected.

“Medical attendance on women; the sole management of women’s schools and colleges; the reform of charitable work; clerical work in women’s institutions; shops and businesses connected with the clothing and wants of women; the vast social question of the reform of domestic service and the reorganising the conditions of the home. These as great as any political questions. Why not tackled first. Good practice for the others.”

‘Why, these are only the old platitudes on the subject, Myles,’ interposed Frankfort. ‘When will you get to your peroration?’

‘I am coming there now, if you can only keep quiet a while and listen to what you don’t fancy.

“My respected sisters,” I would say, “while you must ever be weaker than men in the public sphere, you will ever be stronger than them in other spheres. Your morality is higher, and you are as much superior to them in home and social duties as they are to you in politics. And which are the grander? Yours surely. You mould the conditions upon which all human government depends. Politics are but a small part of life, and not the highest part. For those of you who are anxious to undertake them, your case is made the harder by the fact that you are only a small minority among your sisters. Most women who have homes of their own will keep there. Nature, I admit, has been a bit unfair to you, and some tell you that you can overcome this natural disadvantage by public meetings and ballot-boxes, and general politics, and Acts of Parliament, which expressly declare that you are to be the same as men. If all this does come to pass, the melancholy, but still respectful, sentiment of the Brute will be ‘Here’s to Woman, once our superior, now our equal.’”

‘That would be my peroration,’ added Myles, looking round at his friend. ‘It’s fine, isn’t it?’

‘Yes, very,’ said Frankfort; ‘and, like most perorations, it has not much to do with the subject in debate. You don’t grow wiser as you grow older, Myles. That’s just the way you used to harangue Chadwick and the rest of us on our walks in the old country.’

‘Well, and I suppose common-sense is not geographical

in its character. What was common-sense in Scotland is common-sense in Excelsior too.'

'Ah, if it *is* common-sense. But your book will be too late. The Bill is passed—become a reality.'

'Yes, but the metamorphosis of woman into man is not. Perhaps never will get itself passed.'

'Ah, say or write what you please, Myles Dillon, the age is beginning to realise that the human race is not made up of men merely.'

'I agree with you there, Teddy. It would not be for long anyway.'

'Well, well, Myles, let us leave the women. We are now going to take in hand in Parliament what will please you.'

'What's that?' asked Dillon.

'Why, to reorganise the Border Rangers, and prevent in the future bungling such as sent you that bugler boy patient that you took such an interest in. You will give us credit then, anyway.'

'Yes, if you do it in the right way, that is, outright.'

And soon the two were busy discussing this subject, that was now beginning to stir the political world of the Province.

Dillon, with a feeling that he did not always display, urged his friend, now that he was a public man, to see that the reform was thorough. His earnestness arose from the fact that, after all his efforts to save the boy, treacherous after-effects from the wound had developed, and the lad had died. No honest surgeon likes to lose his man or boy, and Dillon relieved his feelings by maintaining in conversation with his friends that some prominent member of the Government ought to be hanged for his murder.

This question of reform of the Rangers, simple though it was, was destined to involve our politician in further party complications.

The subject was becoming, as the phrase goes, a live one, for the outbreaks of the natives on the Border were making settlement there insecure, and the public, while slow to heed the mere logical demonstration of public evils, are sensitive to realise them when practical experience brings

them home to them. The Government called upon General Dowden, the General of the local troops, for a report upon the best means for securing the good management and efficiency of the force. The General was only an old soldier, and knew nothing of politics. He soon sent in his plan for reform, the main feature of which was a system of pensions for men and officers after twenty years' service, in connection with a rather lower rate of pay to begin with, which should gradually increase as the years went on. In this way, he maintained, there would be an inducement to men to wait in the service and get experience, while the fear of forfeiting the pension would operate to prevent misconduct.

Such was the plan of General Dowden, and it might appear to be a plain matter of business to deal with it. But it was by no means so plain as might be thought. Not a few public men, in fact, were much perplexed about it. They wanted to be guided by public opinion upon the matter, and the question was, What was political public opinion? or rather, What would it develop into when the subject came to be agitated? For though there was a general feeling in favour of doing something effective to improve the force, there was also a feeling, powerful among many, though as yet dormant, against any system of pensions.

It was hard to say how these two tendencies would develop. Even Secker Secretary was not clear upon the point. In these early days, when any one asked him what he thought of the General's proposals, he would reply, looking straight at the questioner, and slightly elevating his eyebrows, as if with surprise:

'Think, my dear sir? I think nothing. I think what my Executive think, and, sir, they do not meet till next week.'

This week seemed to belong to a class similar to that of the Moveable Feasts, as it was hard to say when it began or ended, or where it was to be found.

Sir Donald MacLever, when he was asked his opinion by the blundering Mr. Larkins, Member for the agricultural district of Doublestow, eyed him for a while in a freezing manner, and then replied in a deep tone of voice:

‘My good sir, when you have a little more experience, I hope that you will understand that it is not usual for the physician to prescribe until he is called in.’

He then walked away, leaving poor Larkins to realise that he was rather a fool. Being only a country member, and a young one, he did not understand that the fact was that Sir Donald did not wish, at present, to commit himself either way upon the subject. Du Tell, however, hurried about among all classes of political people, particularly among those who were connected with the Press, remarking that they might take his word for it, old Billy Brereton would put his foot in it, and propose something reactionary. And certainly it is only too true that often ill-bodings are justified by events.

The political excitement upon the subject continued to grow and spread as the time came near for the Government to announce their policy. It even reached the quiet precincts of the University. The position which the Honourable Mr. Dorland took up struck our politician as being peculiar. They had met about some University matters in that same spick-and-span chamber of the President, surrounded by the busts and the portraits and the beautiful books. After they had settled their business, political affairs in which they were both interested naturally were referred to. Mr. Dorland praised Frankfort’s speech upon the Woman question, but regretted that the Government were not turned out upon it. Our politician was surprised to notice that the President seemed to know all about the hurried proposal of Du Tell to move a hostile amendment. To his remark that he could not see the wisdom of losing a great measure of public justice for the sake of turning out the Ministry, the President replied that the material interests of the country were languishing for the want of the progressive policy that Sir Donald MacLever would adopt; and that, moreover, he would do justice to woman as well as Mr. Brereton, and perhaps even more completely.

‘You see we have great material interests to consider,’ said the President, stretching back in his chair and turning in a confidential manner towards Frankfort. ‘Brereton is an obstinate fellow—impracticable.’ He went on to speculate

with some keenness upon the prospect of the Government being turned out on the Rangers' Reorganisation Bill.

'I hope that they will propose some effective plan,' remarked Frankfort.

'Brereton is sure to put his foot in it,' said Dorland.

This was just what Du Tell had said, and he had darkly hinted that it originally came from Sir Donald himself. It thus became the accepted formula of the party. But Frankfort did not feel disposed to pursue the topic, so he rose to go. The President, who had appeared ready to settle down to a discussion on the best way to get Mr. Brereton out, after a momentary pause, said :

'Well, Professor, if there is a change of Government, you are safe for the Education and Public Knowledge Bureau. Great chance of usefulness there—both for yourself and for us here.'

'Why, really, Mr. President, I had never thought about that.'

'But you *ought* to think of it,' emphatically replied the President as they shook hands and parted.

While politicians were thus speculating, and the public interest in the subject was daily rising, one of the two secret political institutions in the English form of government, the Cabinet, was understood to be daily sitting, debating what policy the Government would adopt. The Cabinet, a body unknown to the English Constitution, has come to be its ruling authority. It sits in secret ; there is no law directing its proceedings ; the people have no direct voice in appointing it. But there is no popular jealousy regarding either its power or its private cogitations. Generally it is merged in its chief, and if he is a popular idol, like Mr. Gladstone, it partakes of his popularity, and enjoys under him a free hand over a wide range of matters, so long as all is done in the people's name. For the people like an autocrat, so long as he is a people's autocrat. It would no doubt have been interesting to the public of Excelsior to have read a verbatim report of what Ministers in their Cabinet said about this Pensions question—the frank avowals as to the right thing to do ; the limitations suggested by obvious expediency ; in what way the fewest points of attack would be presented to

the foe ; plausible methods of shaping what might be unpopular, or modifications to catch doubtful votes ; casual meetings with sundry magnates, not forgetting those of the Press, planned to usefully happen. Nor let us, in justice, forget that other simple alternative, not wholly unknown to Cabinets, the plain and direct resolve to do the right thing and fear not. But the public make no claim for this information ; though politicians speculated upon the subject with eagerness, for all agreed that, whatever it was, the Government must stand or fall by it. If it was unpopular, Dorland's hopes would be realised, and there would be an end politically to Brereton.

They were not kept long in suspense. It was announced that the Bill was ready, and a few days later the Premier and Minister of Militia moved for leave to introduce it, in a crowded House, with a still more crowded gallery, in which Secker Secretary and Mons. Froessolecque sat conspicuous, and Mr. Walter Crane lurked unseen. Mr. Brereton adopted the course sometimes taken of explaining the provisions of his Bill upon this motion. He could not help at first getting involved in some of his facts, and putting several propositions the wrong way. But he expressed himself with rough power, as his subject cleared before him, on the solemn duty to put a stop to this bungling management of the force, which led to the needless shedding of blood, 'black and white,' as he exclaimed, with some feeling. He made an allusion to the death of the young bugler that rather went home to our politician, as he already knew the facts from Myles Dillon, and incidentally paid a compliment to the skill and ceaseless attention of that gentleman, which had unhappily proved to be all in vain. He boldly stated that the Bill substantially adopted General Dowden's plan, and that it carried out the double principle of a system of pensions, with its natural correlative of a slightly lower daily pay. Finally, he broke out into a rough-hewn peroration, in which he challenged any man, on whichever side of the House he sat, to come out into the open and say that the Government were not having an honest try to deal with a 'life and death sort of a question,' and he denounced in an imperfect figure of speech those who would 'turn the bodies

of the slain, white men or brown men, into a stalking-horse for the ins and outs to fight around.'

Applause from the Ministerial Benches greeted him as he sat down, and indeed in the House generally, and in the galleries, there was, for the time, sympathy for the speaker and his cause.

The House then adjourned the debate for a fortnight, in order to give the country time to understand 'the startling proposals' which had been made, as Sir Donald termed them.

The great question of reorganising the Rangers, and particularly of pensions or no pensions, was thus fairly launched before the people of Excelsior. To the observer from the outside of politics it would seem, as has been said, to be a not difficult question. The force ought clearly to be placed upon a sound footing, and whatever means were best for securing that end ought obviously to be taken. Any clear-headed practical man could say what to do, after a few hours' inquiry into the facts. But the simple-minded looker-on, who should conclude that this was the only, or even the primary, question that now agitated those who had to deal with the matter would be misled by the outward appearances which play so large a part in all human affairs, but particularly in the affairs of Government, whatever the form of Government may be—autocratic, aristocratic, or democratic. There were factors in the political equation that was to be worked out quite independent of any plan for organising the Rangers. They were not set down in black and white in the sum, but nevertheless they were there.

Firstly, there was the standing issue: Liberals *versus* Conservatives. Could the Conservatives be defeated on this Border Rangers question? If so, what Liberal can hesitate about securing the triumph of his principles? When looked at from behind the scenes, this abstract controversy between the Liberals and Conservatives becomes in the concrete the question whether Sir Donald should not be in office instead of Mr. Brereton. And here again a variety of personal ambitions, discontents, grudges, dislikes, come into play, and votes are given for reasons quite disconnected with the best plan for reorganising the Rangers.

Then there was the dissatisfaction of some of the great business interests of the Province with Mr. Brereton. The fact that Mr. Dorland and the Silver power distrusted him on the Currency question was not a logical reason for opposing his plan for dealing with the Rangers, but yet it might, in fact, determine several votes on the division. Added to this was the hostility of many of the country party on account of the Premier's obstinacy about Government aid for suppressing the rabbits. The fecundity of rabbits therefore indirectly influenced the result.

Mingling in the crisis, too, came the other causes, interests, platforms, propaganda, all thinking about themselves more than about the Rangers—the Temperance party, the Labour party, the Socialists, the Capitalists, the City interest, the lately victorious Woman's party. Further, there was the feeling that turn about is fair play. And had not Mr. Brereton and his party had their legitimate turn? This, again, is a practical rather than a logical reason for voting against his plan for reorganising the Rangers. But it is a reason.

Still, when we have taken into account all these different forces, social and political, we have not yet reached the determining factor in the solution of this problem. That determining factor was, in truth, none other than Secker Secretary.

The threatened political crisis had stimulated Secker Secretary into a high condition of activity, much in the way as the first touch of summer heat sends the restless flies buzzing about upon their mission in life. His immediate purpose now was to secure the adoption and passing into law of his Bill for classifying the State Service, the principal proposals of which, it will be remembered, he had mentioned to our politician at the Brassville interview. He would prefer getting his Bill from the Liberals, for he was a thorough Liberal in all things, except his own personal affairs, but he would much rather get it from the Conservatives than not get it at all. Whichever party would give him that Bill would have his support and the active aid of the Association and the organisation that it commanded. That organisation was spread over the whole Province.

This being the position of Secker Secretary, he lost no time, after hearing the Premier's statement introducing the Rangers Bill, in ascertaining how the facts stood which would determine his action. He respectfully asked for an interview with the Premier, and when they met, in a deferential manner begged his attention for the session just opened to the Bill to Classify the Workers. He did not make the least reference to the Rangers Bill, or the probable action of the Opposition with regard to it. Far from it, he looked frankly into Brereton's honest countenance, as he merely asked about the Classification Bill, and expressed the anxiety of the Workers 'to know their fate,' as he expressed it.

William Brereton was a sanguine man. He was rather misled by the good reception of his speech introducing his Bill. He believed that the public feeling was with him in regard to the Rangers. All things considered, he determined to hold by what he had said when Secker Secretary last saw him—that the rates of payments and increases proposed in the Workers Bill he could not 'swallow,' but as to some minor points of the regulations, he might meet them, though 'he would say straight out that he liked the tinkering of his own Bill better.'

He was civil, for he knew Secker's power; but he made so little actual concession that at last that gentleman rose to go, with the feeling that he had small hopes from the Government. As usual, the Premier had been rather discursive in his observations. So Mr. Secker, as he stood calmly folding up the two Bills which had been the subject of the conversation, observed with an aggrieved look:

'Why, then, Mr. Premier, I think the only remaining inquiry I have to make is, to ask in what terms you would like me to present your answer, as Head of the Government, to the respectful request of the State workers?'

The only answer that honest William Brereton could suggest was that the State had not the money to meet their demands. Where was it? Did they expect him to fill a lucky stocking for them, so that they should find all they wanted in the morning?

'Well, then, Mr. Premier, I think that the interview

that you have done me the honour to grant me may here terminate, and that I may respectfully take my leave, with many thanks,' observed Secker. Brereton briefly said 'Bye-bye,' as he waved his hand in adieu.

As the Secretary walked slowly away from the Premier's office, he felt that he could not calculate upon any willing action by the Government, though of course it might be possible to force their hand. It was a question whether that would be the wiser course, or whether it would be better to join Sir Donald MacLever and turn them out on this Pensions issue. It was important then to know what Sir Donald would be ready to do about the Workers' Classification Bill. So he directed his steps next to that honourable gentleman's office. The first person he met there was Du Tell, who informed him that his chief had gone to the country for a brief holiday, being somewhat indisposed; but he was going up to see him next day, and would carry any message for him that Mr. Secker might like to send.

Secker Secretary was aware that it was Sir Donald's habit to make himself difficult of access when a political crisis was impending; while Du Tell was always in the way—in fact, he was never out of the way—to make statements, which, from his known intimacy with his chief, had weight with the public, yet were not binding on the principal. Secker was not deceived as to the true position of affairs; but, after a moment's hesitation, resolved that it was better to confide to Du Tell his wish, with a view to future action, to know Sir Donald's attitude to the Workers Bill. Could he, Secker, tell his Executive that Sir Donald was right on the Bill? Du Tell assured Secker that Sir Donald was *right*; but that he would see the Secretary when he got back to town, and would let him know particulars.

The two friends parted—for, personally, friends they were—each understanding the position of the other in this negotiation; and a couple of days later Du Tell was back in town, and met Secker Secretary with the satisfactory intelligence that he had seen Sir Donald, and, just as he anticipated, he was liberal on the Workers Bill. Of course,

he (Du Tell) could not give pledges on details, as he had not a copy of Secker's Bill with him, but as to justice to the State workers, he might be relied upon for it. The Secretary asked a few general questions, apparently for information, but really to get time to think whether it would be worth while to try to exact a more specific pledge. Then he warmly pressed Du Tell's hand, thanked him for his valued service, and took his departure, only remarking—

'It is pleasant to deal with honourable men, Mr. Du Tell. I take to them naturally.'

He went straight to the central office of the State Workers' Association, and passed through the outer rooms into his private apartment, saying to the messenger in a peremptory tone, as he passed, 'Let no one disturb me.' He sat down at his desk, and swung round in his revolving chair in an unconscious sort of way, till the handsome portrait of Major Stephen Trounce, the Chairman of the Association, which was hanging on the wall, faced him as he turned. To any one then able to look into the room unobserved, it would have seemed as though he was intently studying the aristocratic features of the Major. But, as a fact, he was not thinking of the Major at all—did not even realise that his portrait was before him. He was deeply cogitating over the question whether it would be wiser for the State workers to join Sir Donald and put out the Government on the Pensions question, or to use their power in the House to keep Brereton in, to let him know this and exact the best terms from him. He had to decide at once, and he knew that his decision was that of the Association.

Secker felt some difficulty in making up his mind. True, he mused, old Brereton won't now agree to what I want, but though he is an honest sort of fellow, yet all men have an eye to the main chance, and if I can persuade him that I have a majority of members for my Bill, he might come to some compromise rather than be beaten by Sir Donald. But I am not sure about Sir Donald, if he was once firmly seated. Still, Brereton has absolutely refused my demands. All new Governments are pliable at first. Brereton has been in for the natural term of a Government; would it not be wise to make friends with the coming party?

I may not trust Sir Donald, but then it would be to his interest to work with me. And what a lesson to politicians to turn out the Government ostensibly on the Rangers Bill, but to let it be understood that it was really because they refused justice to the State workers? Finally, the Opposition would certainly raise the cry against Pensions, and could he refuse to join it? And, on the other hand, what a capital cry it would be—and *shall be*, he concluded, bringing down his hand emphatically, it so happened, on the bell on the table, which he had not noticed, as he was still gazing unconsciously at the portrait of Major Trounce.

The messenger promptly came to the door, and stood waiting for orders. The fate of both Rangers Bill and Ministry was sealed on the stroke of that bell. Secker, in his calm, measured tone, instructed the man to go round to the Public Offices to Major Trounce, and ask when it would be convenient to him to see the Secretary. Soon the answer came back from the Major that he would himself call upon Mr. Secker after office hours; and when the two met later in the afternoon, it was arranged that the Executive should be summoned without delay to finally settle the draft of the Bill to regulate the State workers. At the meeting of the Executive the proceedings were private; but it was understood that the details of the Bill took a long time to finally settle.

However this might be, what was certain was, that immediately after the meeting a strong opposition to the Government measure for reorganising the Border Rangers seemed to spring up spontaneously and simultaneously in a number of different directions.

The *Sweet-Brier* had hitherto opposed the Bill, but not in its really fierce style. Now it came out with one of those scalping articles that its readers so much admired, which was said to be written by Mons. Froessolecque himself, but discerning readers held it must have been from the pen of even a greater man than Mons. Froessolecque. As Slater Scully remarked when he read it, it came refreshingly straight from the shoulder. It called loudly on the country to take vengeance on a Government whose policy unblushingly disclosed the twin monsters of Despotism and

Corruption—the corrupt Pension system of England together with the autocratic militarism of Germany.

The note thus sounded by the *Sweet-Brier* was faithfully repeated by a number of journals throughout the Province, who made it a point to be on the Liberal side of every question once it was declared by the *Sweet-Brier* what the Liberal side was. Meetings were organised ; speeches were made ; statistics were furnished ; figures spoke as they were wanted to. At a vast mass gathering in the City Hall, Mr. Du Tell, having apologised for the absence of Sir Donald MacLever owing to a cold, made an impressive speech, announcing that the issue before the people was whether their industry was to be mortgaged for all time to provide pensions for Billy Brereton's nominees. Mr. Theodore Bunker, M.P. for Leadville, concluded a stirring oration by assuring his hearers that the people from his side of the country would rise as one man and fight to the last man against the nefarious and mediæval proposals of the Government. What the last epithet meant, many in the hall were not clear, yet it was felt to be effective. But the impassioned speech of the evening was made by Mr. Slater Scully, the Member for Biggleswade. He declared that at last the old Tories had been and done it : had brought the poisoned arrow out of the quiver, the stone from the sling, the bolt from the blue. The Pension system was to be inaugurated in Excelsior : the corrupt pension systems of Europe in their fair Province. The brow of the country grew pale at the proposals openly avowed to adopt in their fair new land the worst devices of the worn-out countries of the old world. Let the men of Excelsior, nay, let the lately enfranchised women, the one in their might, the other in their loveliness, arise as one man and declare in tones of thunder that they would never be enslaved in this, their native land, by one of the most hoary abuses of the old world.

Other inspiring addresses were delivered, and at the close a vote of thanks to the council for the use of the hall was moved by our old acquaintance, Mr. Meeks, the late Member for Brassville. He was brief, but said with emotion that though at present retired from politics, his soul was so

stirred by the daring nature of the recent proposals of the Government that he could hold his peace no longer. They knew that he was a man of few words, and quiet words too, but he felt his spirit so moved by the monstrous evils which they were threatened with, that he was afraid himself of getting beyond his own control if he did not sit down without saying all he felt, which accordingly he did.

Other meetings throughout the Province followed, and the public mind gradually got agitated, like the sea, by the process of continued blowing upon it. It was coming home to all politicians that they must be up and doing upon this burning question. Among others, it was coming home to our politician. What was his attitude with regard to it? He was inexperienced, and had started by considering the question upon its own merits, just as a man outside of politics might have done. Thus considered, it appeared to be plain enough. The plan of General Dowden seemed well adapted to secure the desired end—the proper control of the Rangers. It was, in fact, upon the lines that any business man or business institution would have adopted in similar circumstances. He did not know the inner history of the fierce agitation that had sprung up against the Bill; nor had he realised the political aspect of the subject—the need of turning out Brereton, and the excellent cry for such a purpose that the proposals for pensions might be made to serve. This had not occurred to him, and, as he was in the habit of saying what he thought, he soon found himself drawn into an embarrassing position, from which he could extricate himself only by recanting views that he had openly expressed, and which he did hold. He had, in fact, forgotten Quiggle's advice, to keep her free. We can only stand by and wish him a safe deliverance.

He now frequently went to the Opposition Room at the House, for the purpose of meeting with his brother Members and discussing the impending crisis with them. Here he found waiting for him daily his bundle of letters. Dealing with these was always a perplexing business for him.

‘What a bother these letters from constituents are!’ he involuntarily exclaimed, as the jovial presence of Slater Scully presented itself at the door.

'That they are, my friend, if you make them so; but they are not if you don't make them so,' cheerily replied that legislator, with glances towards Frankfort that might be termed glowing; for he wore large gold-rimmed spectacles that appeared to be of high magnifying power. His eyes looked large and mellow behind them.

'Why, Mr. Scully——' began our politician.

'Slater Scully, if you please,' interposed the bearer of that name. He attached importance to the Slater, as it indicated his connection, remote though it was, with the family of the famous fox-hunting Slaters in his native Ireland.

'Oh, I beg pardon—Mr. Slater Scully. You'll excuse me, I know. But how can you avoid the trouble of these letters?'

'Simple as lying, my good sir. Do as I do. Only open your box once a month. Then you will find one-third of the letters have settled themselves; another third, concerning subscriptions, you couldn't, at least I couldn't, settle whenever I opened them; and as for the third third——'

'Yes, the other third!' exclaimed Frankfort, laughing.

'Well, as to the third third, I send, in reply, answers mainly composed of imprecations on the red-tapeism, delays, bungling, haggling, belated doings and dilatory transactions of an unpunctual, postliminious, and utterly Tory Government. The two or three things of real importance will have kept, and you can fix them up then, if they are fixable, you see.'

And Slater Scully glared on our politician in a confidential manner.

'Truly, not a bad way either; but are your constituents satisfied?'

'My constituents? Of course they are, or would I be here to-day to tell the tale? Every now and then I give the noble men of Biggleswade—and now the dear women will have it too—a harangue of a thrilling nature on some question that touches them up, like this Pensions business; or on the imperious need of at once constructing a railway out of their town to nowhere in particular, as a distinctly national work; or, if there is none such to the fore, then something on the primeval and inalienable rights of men in

general—and now of women—to carry out their own enlightened wills in all things, and they forget about their letters for the time. When you are a bit longer in the yard here, you'll find out all about it.'

And Slater Scully looked tenderly on our politician through his spectacles, as feeling for a beginner. Then wheeling round in his chair, he exclaimed, with emphasis—'Grand topic, these blessed pensions.'

'But, do you know, Mr. Slater Scully,' said our politician, not wishing to have his position misunderstood, 'I am afraid I must differ from you there. I saw the report of your eloquent speech at the City Hall. I must confess that the Government plan seems to me to be fair enough.'

Slater Scully looked round at him with some surprise in his countenance, which soon, however, gave way to a musing, contemplative look as he exclaimed—'Differ from me, dear friend? Or I differ from you? Wherefore? Can individualistic differences have place in the even tramp of heroes marching in the same regiment? Do differences exist? As to that I never administer interrogatories. The question is, to be or not to be in the ranks? There's the respect that makes the sea of troubles of so long political life to the euphemistic politician.' And Slater Scully went out to the verandah to have a quiet cigar.

Our politician, in his amused interest in Slater Scully's frank exposition of his principles and confused metaphors, had not noticed Mr. Du Tell coming into the room. Turning round he found that Honourable Member's keen eyes peering down his neck, apparently, as he stood behind him.

'Government plan fair enough?' he repeated interrogatively to Frankfort. Du Tell had already some experience of Frankfort's impracticable way of conducting himself, but was quite taken aback by hearing, in the very Opposition Room itself, a distinct avowal that the Government plan was fair. He knew that Sir Donald calculated positively on putting out Brereton and Company, as he, rather gaily for him, phrased it; and as for himself, he was already considering what office he had the best chance of getting in the new Ministry. He scarcely knew how to proceed with such an unusual and also dangerous display of mutiny in the ranks.

At this moment the deep tones of Sir Donald Mac-Lever's voice were heard on the verandah complimenting Mr. Slater Scully on his last speech on the great Pensions issue, and congratulating that gentleman and some other Members who were standing around on the near triumph that was in store for their principles. He now entered the room and greeted our politician with more cordiality than usual. This was no time for private likes and dislikes. Having recovered from his recent cold, he was now busy gathering his party together for the coming struggle. He was not, perhaps, more amiable than before, but he was ever prudent. He therefore greeted Frankfort with some cordiality, and in a mode slightly hilarious.

'Why, yes, I rather think it is done this time,' he remarked, continuing the thread of what he had been saying outside—'I think it is done this time. As for the Honourable William Brereton, sometimes irreverently styled Billy Brereton, B.B., we may promote him in the alphabet, and declare him now D.D., with a dash.'

And he did smile, relaxing into unwonted cheerfulness at the prospect, and evidently enjoying his ponderous joke.

'But, sir, here's the Professor approves the Government plan, and says that it is fair enough,' remarked, or rather gasped out, Du Tell.

The style of Slater Scully could not exaggerate the sudden fall in the countenance of Sir Donald as he heard these few words from his faithful henchman. He saw the seriousness of the position. For though there was much noisy feeling abroad about the Government Bill, there was also, and still to be dealt with, the good sense of the country, that cared little for the party aspect of the question. In the House of Representatives this element was fairly strong; so that, while he spoke to his followers in confident tones, he, in fact, expected to have only a small majority against the Bill. This odd-man-out might possibly influence two or three votes to support the Government proposal, and then where would the majority be? Three going from one side to the other counted on a division as six. The prospect was serious.

So Sir Donald composed his features as well as he could

into their usual staid and slightly scornful aspect, and sitting down as if proposing to enter fully into the question, observed to Frankfort, in a tone of constrained quiet—‘Why, what’s the matter? Not going to join the enemy on the day of battle, I presume?’

‘To tell the truth, Sir Donald, I had not given much attention to the effect of the question on the Government’s position. Some time ago I became acquainted with the demoralised condition of the Rangers, and the loss of life thereby; something must be done, and certainly the Government proposals seem to me at least to deserve candid consideration.’

‘Candid consideration?’ Sir Donald repeated in a tone partly satirical, partly scornful.

Rather roused by this manner of treating a question of urgent public need, our politician was recapitulating in an earnest manner the gravity of the evil that had to be grappled with, the absolute need of doing something, and the really superficial nature of the objections raised against the present proposals, when Sir Donald, stooping down nearer to him, as if desirous to impress some obvious fact upon a stupid mind, and thus prevent waste of time by useless talk, said in a slow, imperious tone—‘My good sir, *can’t* you see that the people are in no humour for pensions?’

Before our politician could answer, the conversation was interrupted by the bending figure and soft voice of Walter Crane, who had slid quietly into the room, and presented himself at Sir Donald’s elbow.

‘Beg pardon, yer Honer,’ he said, addressing Sir Donald, and bringing his head down near the table—‘beg pardon; his Excellency the Minister sent me to tell yer Honer that he and the Honorable Mr. Dorland and the mining deputation are waiting as soon as yer Honer can come over.’

‘Tell the Minister that I will be over directly. I have promised my friend Dorland—your President, by the way—to introduce this deputation on the mining difficulty,’ he said, turning to Frankfort, and concealing his feelings as well as he could. He felt that it would be wiser not to break absolutely with our politician till he had exhausted all possible means of influencing him, or at least restraining his adverse action. So, as he left, he added: ‘This

interesting discussion must stand adjourned till a later day. Meanwhile, both you and I still belong to the Liberal party, do we not?’

As Du Tell hurried after him, he had only time to send one Parthian glance of scrutiny at the mutineer, as he half-whispered to him: ‘That’s the point, you see. Same party both belong to. A party can’t move different ways at the same time, can it?’

‘Certainly not, Mr. Du Tell—certainly not,’ answered our politician, acknowledging to himself that there was no denying that proposition.

As the day approached for the debate to be renewed on the Pensions Bill, as the Government measure was adroitly designated by the Opposition, Frankfort was made more and more sensible of the attention that a good many people were devoting to the action that he proposed to adopt with regard to it. He early had a note from Quiggle begging him to keep her free, so as to be able to bear up a bit, and tack if necessary. Meeks had just paid a flying visit to his old constituents, and had created a favourable impression by the fervid language in which he had denounced the old-world abuse of pensions at some committee meetings that he had attended. Miss Gazelle, as Honorary Secretary for the Liberal Persons Club (both sexes), forwarded a copy of the resolutions that the Liberal Persons had unanimously adopted, expressing their ‘lively hope and fervid trust’ that the fair Province of Excelsior was not coming under the Pensions Blight. There was a confidential note from his uncle, Mr. Fairlie, telling him that the popular feeling in his constituency was all against a Pensions system; and one from Mr. Lamborn, congratulating him on the excellent chance that now offered of getting in a Government that would do more for the Rabbit suppression and the country districts. Old Karl Brumm sent him a cutting from the *Trumpeter*, which contained a quotation from the English Black Book, wherein were revealed the iniquities of the Pension system of the old land, showing in detail the vast sums disposed of in that way, and for what services they were many of them originally granted. Under the extract Mr. Brumm wrote only ‘*Ecce signum.*’

Jacob Shumate wrote at some length, reminding our politician of the great pension scandal which he had exposed in his presence at Glooscap, and begging merely to observe that it was now, at last, made apparent why the Minister had refused to stop that malversation of the municipal funds, since at the very time his Government was arranging for a more extensive plan of public plunder of its own.

Even Neal Nickerson, the schoolmaster, who generally differed from his neighbours, this time agreed with them, and wrote to Frankfort reminding him of what he termed the standard definition of a pensioner—‘A slave of State hired by a stipend to obey his master.’ Finally, there was a kind note from Mrs. Lamborn, this time all written by herself, as Miss Lamborn was, she mentioned, away for a few days staying with the Le Fanus, asking him to spend some of the approaching Christmas holidays with them. But she too alluded to the crisis. She had no idea what all the excitement was about, or what Mr. Lamborn and Mr. Hedger and Mr. Le Fanu were so eager for, but she hoped that Frankfort would distinguish himself, and make a long speech, and put out What’s-his-name and the Government, and become Premier himself, and end by getting a peerage, like Lord Kilgour.

About this time it so happened that Mr. Dorland asked him to lunch quietly with them on a Saturday. When he came he found it was indeed only a quiet lunch, as there was no one there but Mr. and Mrs. Dorland. The President was graver than usual. When lunch was over, Mr. Dorland asked him to come into the library to see some new classical books that had just arrived, and when they had turned over the books, conversation naturally verged from mere records of the past to the events of the present, and to the crisis that was now becoming acute in the political world of Excelsior.

‘I am told,’ said the President in his most deliberate manner, ‘that the thing is closer than they thought, owing to all the Bordermen having to go for the Bill, pension or no pension. To tell you the truth, Professor, I hear that it very much depends on yourself. I have heard a rumour of your supporting Brereton. If so, three or four others may

want an excuse for doing the same, and Sir Donald is out of it.'

Frankfort was surprised to find how he was getting involved in this apparently simple Pension question, and forced either into a position of political difficulty or to disavow the opinions that he had already declared, and which he sincerely held. He could not be false to his own convictions, so he made a direct answer to the President's indirect appeal.

'As to supporting Brereton, that is rather a misleading way to put it. I vote for the Bill because I think it is in the main right. I see no objection to a sensible system of pensions, as they are the best means for securing what we want.'

'No more do I, Professor. I adopt it in my own business. But that's not exactly the point. In politics we must look a little abroad, and a bit ahead. The fact is, that the question of all for Excelsior now is the looming Silver question: I, you, all of us are concerned in it. In fact,' continued the President, bending forward and bringing his open hand down on the table, as he looked in his solid way at Frankfort—'the fact is that the University very much depends on it——'

'Upon what, Mr. Dorland?' inquired our politician.

'Upon silver keeping its value.'

'Really?'

'Yes, Professor; if something cannot be done to check the depreciation, how can we maintain our present establishment? How is it to be done?'

'To be sure, the fees are so low; they could not do it without the endowment,' replied Frankfort.

'Just so. Low fees are the popular thing—the right thing. The public want everything good, by all means, and without paying for it. It is all right if some one will endow you, *and*,' added the President emphatically, 'if the endowments keep up their value.'

'But, may I ask, Mr. Dorland, how this question, serious as it is, affects the Bill for regulating the Rangers?'

'Even thus, my friend. Sir Donald and the Liberals are the only party that are strong enough to handle the Currency question. That, by the way,' the President added

in a confidential manner, 'is why I was so pleased when you entered Parliament as a Liberal. Sir Donald, you see, cannot take up Silver for any good unless he has power. If he loses next week, Brereton is as good as in for the next four years. Where, then, is Silver? Nay, where our University endowments? You see, there is more in these political issues than often meets the eye. The real point is to get Sir Donald in. The thing is serious.'

'It has also a serious aspect for me, Mr. Dorland. Am I to vote a useful and necessary reform to be bad in order to get Sir Donald in?'

'If thereby you can secure a greater good! Let me ask you, Professor, one question,' continued the President. 'Do you say that in politics you are to do only what you personally fancy?'

'The question is getting rather spread out, Mr. Dorland. The issue before me is, that here is a good bill for a necessary public object; am I to vote against it simply to defeat Brereton?'

The President was about reiterating the point that pressed on him, the absolute need of silver keeping up, when Mrs. Dorland came quietly into the room, busy, in homely fashion, with her knitting, to ask whether she should send them in tea or coffee. She also felt some natural curiosity to know what the discussion was about, of which she heard the refrain in the drawing-room. She knew from her husband's manner that there was something of consequence in hand. The President, who made a confidante of his wife in most affairs (except those which concerned finance), as she came in exclaimed in a half-jocular manner — 'See here, Lizzie, here is the Professor going to upset his party on the Pensions Bill and to support the Government.'

'Why?' she asked in a quiet, precise manner.

'Because he likes pensions.'

'That's not it, Mrs. Dorland,' Frankfort interposed. 'It's because I want to give a true vote.'

'Against your party?' inquired Mrs. Dorland. She always accepted her husband's politics.

'Well, Mrs. Dorland, if my party is wrong?'

'Ah, what is your answer to that, Lizzie?' said Dorland,

partly forgetting his vexation in his quiet amusement at his wife's intervention.

'Well, what *I* say is' (dig of the right-hand knitting-needle on '*I*')—what *I* say is, that I would be a sheep or I would be a goat, but I wouldn't be a *straggler*' (dig on '*straggler*').

'Ye hear now,' said the President with a grave laugh. 'So that's all you have got to say, Lizzie?'

'All, except that I want to know whether I will send you in tea or coffee. But perhaps you can't make up your minds about *that*' (dig on '*that*').

'Oh now, my dear, don't be too hard on us. We will come in to you, and you shall decide what we shall take.'

The President thought it better to push the dispute no further then, but to end as pleasantly as possible; and soon the three were seated over their coffee, talking about the new books that they had just been looking at in the library.

When the House met again to resume the debate, Sir Donald spoke briefly. He was satisfied that the Government would, notwithstanding Frankfort's defection, be defeated by a small majority, and that therefore he would have the task afterwards of dealing with the Rangers himself. So he was careful not to say in too explicit a manner what ought to be done; but rather to indulge in general, though emphatic, condemnation of the Government and all its ways. He was particularly severe in his denunciation of the Premier's object in bringing in the Bill at all, which he declared was mere popularity-hunting, because there was some excitement about the disturbances on the Border—a repetition, in fact, of the Woman's question. But, while reprobating the Ministerial proposals, he only incidentally condemned Pensions; in fact, only condemned them as proposed in the Bill before the House, and left it vague what particular aspect of Pensions he referred to. 'Do we want an aristocratic system of Pensions here—an old Tory scheme for them?' he inquired. He concluded his speech by moving an amendment that the House declined to saddle the country with an ill-regulated and wasteful Pension system, or to trust a reactionary Government with the management of the important interests

at stake. He left it to the lesser men who would speak after him to raise the direct cry against all Pensions.

Honest William Brereton then made a short but warm speech, the main feature of which was a denunciation of the evasive nature of Sir Donald's position. He vindicated his Bill, and forcibly denounced the evils that beset the present management of the Rangers. But the chief and the exciting part of his speech was directed towards exposing 'the baneful, tortuous, conscienceless tactics of the honourable gentleman opposite to get into office.' He concluded his invective, which quite amused Sir Donald, by asserting, as he looked straight at the Opposition Benches, that he was proud to believe that there were still men on those benches who would vote for 'staunching the wounds of their country, and refuse to go on shedding innocent, and sometimes youthful, blood to serve the sinister tactics of any party, be they from the east or from the west, or the north or the south, or from any other quarter of the political compass.'

Mr. Du Tell then rose, and, looking inquisitively round the House, referred to the 'excited and excitable peroration of the Premier,' and expressed the hope that, 'while there were patriots on all sides, there would be traitors on none.' Point was given to this remark by the outburst of Opposition cheering that greeted it; even the harsh voice of Sir Donald being heard in the din, and it was an unusual thing for him to go beyond the dignified 'Hear, hear.' He then gave an elaborate account of the abuses of the English aristocratic system of Pensions. The details of the bad, and even odious, nature of the origin of some pensions produced such an impression that, though the self-contained Secker Secretary, who with Mons. Froessolecque occupied front seats in the gallery, gave no outward expression of his feelings, the more excitable Frenchman made slight exclamations, and turned round in a demonstrative way to speak to his companion.

Mr. Du Tell next asked the House what was the real meaning of pensions for the Rangers. 'Did they not see the cloven foot?' he exclaimed. What was the real meaning of the Pension system? The Pension system really meant a lower daily wage. (Loud cheers.) It was seven shillings a day and a pension (if a man ever lived to enjoy it), instead

of the normal wage of eight or nine shillings. Was the House going to sanction this insidious means of invading the ruling rates of wages? There might be loss of life by starvation wages as well as by blackfellows' spears. If they were to talk of blood, let it be about the blood of living people who wanted their daily bread. Turning to the recent 'National Outpourings of the People's Voice,' he asked if this House was a House of *Representatives* or a Council of Autocrats, who had only to do what seemed right in their own eyes? (He uttered the word 'Autocrats' in a sharp, biting, incisive manner.) He disputed the disorganisation of the force, and depreciated General Dowden in an indirect manner. Even if there was some temporary disarrangement, it could, he maintained, be regulated by an appeal to the intelligence of freemen, without their being bamboozled by any vicious system of rewards. Finally, he wound up with an appeal to the House to be as united as the country against any attempt to impose upon the Province the yoke of effete systems for the government of a great and sagacious people.

When Mr. Du Tell sat down, the discussion was for a time carried on by several of the less conspicuous members from both sides, who did not enter very warmly into political conflicts. Some of these spoke plain, strong words about the disasters on the Border, and said that they would support the Bill. Several of them were from the Border districts, and they and their constituents felt the evils of the present system too strongly to be over-critical as to the remedy that was proposed. And there was also to be counted with the general element of common-sense in the House and the desire to do what was right. The danger in all popular assemblies is that when a cry is got up you may not get the individual convictions of men, but only an expression of the general impulse that has been generated.

But the debate went on. Old Mr. Brandreth, Member for the Sheep District of Towrie, supported the Bill, as was expected; but his speech was spoiled by a mishap at the outset. He began by saying that it was a serious thing to shed blood, upon which Mr. Mirehouse, the Member for Bundle Flat, interjected, 'How can you get mutton without?'

At this senseless question there was considerable laughter, for, as a relief to the tension of debate, men will catch at anything for a laugh. Poor Mr. Brandreth was quite put out, and prevented from taking up the thread of his discourse. And yet it was not the intention of the interjector to stop the speech, but only to throw in a lively remark and get the credit of having made a joke. But it silenced Brandreth, who, after a confused and confusing effort to explain that he did not desire to support any extravagant, corrupt Pension system, such as had prevailed in Europe in past times, sat down, leaving on the careless observer the impression that such was the very system that was now being proposed by the Government. Mr. Brandreth could sometimes show fight, and blurt out some effective, perhaps dangerous, rejoinder to an interrupter; but he was not in good fighting form this evening.

Mr. David Stoker, Member for Dead Hatch, spoke next. It so happened that Stoker had personal knowledge of an incident in Frankfort's career which at first sight could be made a plausible ground of reproach to his proposed action now in voting for Pensions. He had sat with him some years before on a Board to inquire into the question of Old Age Pensions to the Poor. Frankfort, though then not known to politics, had been appointed as being an authority upon sociological subjects. When the time came for drawing up the report, he and Stoker were found on opposite sides, as he voted with the majority of the Board (it was only a small one) in favour of requiring some slight co-operation from the recipient towards earning his pension, while Stoker agreed with the minority, that the annual allowance should be granted to every one upon his attaining a certain age, 'by virtue of his manhood.' Thus Frankfort could be popularly said to have opposed a liberal system of pensions to the poor, while Stoker had supported it.

The Honourable Member for Dead Hatch would seem to have risen wholly for the purpose of calling attention to this report. He referred to no other aspect of the matter under debate. He first dealt with himself, and showed why he supported pensions then as strongly as he opposed them now. There was a wide difference between pensions given

to the minions of power and pensions the inalienable birthright of the sons of toil; between the grant to a privileged few and the general possession of the people. He was pleased to feel that his fellow-worker on that Board, Mr. Frankfort, would now have a clear field on which to display his opposition to the Pension system, and, though he had failed to be convinced by that honourable gentleman's reasoning on the wrong side at the Board, he looked forward to being comforted and supported by his arguments on the right side now.

Du Tell looked round inquisitively at our politician, and Sir Donald smiled for the second time that evening.

Frankfort thought that it was time for him to declare himself, so he rose, not without some trepidation, for he was by this time sensible of the difficult position in which he stood.

He began by glancing at the speech of Mr. Stoker, and observed that he did not appear to see the difference between a pension as a method of payment for services rendered and a pension as State gratuity to all. He then went on to the main question. The evils of the present management of the Rangers were admitted by all practical observers. The only question was as to the best remedy. The officer responsible for the management asked for the Pension system so as to be able to enlist, and then continuously retain, the most efficient service. The perversion of the system in the old countries to bad uses was no reason for rejecting it where it could be usefully and economically applied. That pensions were a useful means of getting good service was shown by their being adopted in many of the best-managed business concerns throughout the world. Most Governments adopted them for certain callings—the military especially. It had special claims of its own. If men were wounded, they must be provided for; if killed, their families must. Was this to be done on a system that all could depend upon, or by means of personal appeals to the House and political influence? It was of the last importance that all appointments to the Public Service should be made and promotions given by merit, and not by favour, and this applied more emphatically to the military branch than even to the others. He denied that

public opinion was so pronounced upon the question as some Honourable Members assumed it to be. Some feeling arose from a misapprehension of the facts, and they, as statesmen, and knowing the truth, ought to inform the country, and to act for its best interests. He showed the fallacy of Du Tell's point, that pensions meant low wages. He concluded a brief statement by expressing his regret that he could not see the subject in the same light as some of his friends around him. But to his mind the distinction between the use and the abuse of pensions was so clear that he could not refrain from giving his vote for this Bill, which was so required in the public interest.

In speaking, our politician felt the difference between when you are voicing the general fervid sentiments of your hearers and when you speak to combat adverse feeling and hostile critics. As Myles Dillon had said, it was one thing to harangue with the crowd behind you, another to argue with the numbers against you. It was one thing to declaim on the generous side of the Woman's Rights question and another to defend Pensions, surrounded by his party, who regarded him as a deserter for so doing.

When he had concluded, Slater Scully stood up, his look gleaming with the satisfaction of a coming triumph. He was genial even in his invective, so his attacks, though loud and boisterous, never wounded, as did often the more measured but blistering utterances of Sir Donald.

Slater Scully commenced by expressing his unfeigned amazement at the unprecedented sentiments of his friend, Professor Frankfort. To him his honourable friend was an enigma as perplexing as the Pyramids, as insoluble as the Sphinx. Far be it from him to deny that his honourable friend was straight. Indeed, he was so straight that at times he felt out of the perpendicular, and sometimes on the wrong side. His honourable friend had said that he doubted if public opinion was against pensions; but could he have been present at the gigantic and tumultuous meeting at Biggleswade the other evening, he would then have had to admit that public opinion on this national question was, he would not say growing, but bursting out into dazzling bloom.

Coming to the great question of the evening, Slater Scully said that he would be brief. Argument had been exhausted in demonstration of the outrageous nature of the proposals of the Government. Every term of obloquy had been applied to them by indignant critics inside and outside the House, and had been happily applied. He declared that ever since the Honourable the Premier had introduced the Pensions Bill—evil omen, ugly sound to free men—he had pondered over what could have been his motive in so doing. He had thought of it in his waking hours, and it had even flitted through his dreams. Was it his deliberate intention to fasten upon Excelsior the horrors of the European Pensions system? If so, let him beware. He would find that the people of this great Province would still assert themselves as free men, and that the tyrant would brandish his whip before them in vain. (This last outburst was excited by the fact that the Government Whip was going the round of the House, trying to make up his numbers for the division that was now imminent.) Finally, as was written in the *Sweet-Brier* next morning: ‘The Honourable Member for Biggleswade wound up a convincing and impassioned oration by declaring that some men were ever willing to sell their country, and some were glad to have a country to sell; but the heavens forbid that the finger of posterity should ever be able to point the eye of scorn at the recreant roll, and there read the name of Slater Scully.’

Amidst the applause that the eloquent peroration excited, the cries for a division were loudly heard. The Honourable Mr. M'Grorty was put up by the Government to wind up the debate with one of his rallying speeches, but though he spoke with vigour, especially in denouncing the Opposition, he did not produce his usual effect. He needed popular fervour to support him, and the popular fervour was now the other way. In political affairs we are very much led by names. Who does not know the value of being called a Liberal? And the ancient abuses of the Pension system in Europe, by-gone though they were, had created among many an innate popular feeling against them, unless for the poor. Still, there were many in the House who looked behind the names of things, and there were others whose districts had suffered

from the Native disorders ; so that, when the Speaker announced the result, though the Government were defeated, it was not by a large majority. Still, they were defeated. William Brereton was out, and Sir Donald was in—or, at least, would be sent for. The Border Rangers' organisation must stand over till things took another turn. Du Tell turned to his patron more admiringly than ever, and Slater Scully beamed through his glasses looks of benevolent satisfaction, and felt at peace with all men—even with our politician.

Great was the excitement in and around the House of Representatives, and on the broad steps leading to the verandah, when the defeat of the Government was announced. But of the thousands who discussed that event, and expressed various opinions as to its significance and upon the incidents that marked it,—how it showed that the people were resolved never to allow the Pension system a footing in the free land of Excelsior ; how Sir Donald had proved too much for B. B. ; how great the influence of the Press had been in rousing the people to the true issue ; how exhaustive was the speech of Du Tell ; how extraordinary that of our politician ; how impassioned that of Slater Scully,—of all those who talked and speculated thus, only a very few knew that the crisis had in fact been brought about by one man, popularly known as Secker Secretary. Had he been able to come to terms with Mr. Brereton about the Workers' Classification Bill, the machinery of agitation would never have been set going, and the Government Bill, modified in some of its details, would have been quietly passed.

But all history tells the same tale. Things are not what they seem. The true story of great events is often different from the surface appearance. It was not the great Napoleon, but others behind him, who planned the revolution which placed him on the steps of the throne. It was not MacLever and the Pensions Bill that overthrew Brereton, but Secker Secretary and the Workers Bill.

During the periods of changing Governments, Walter Crane had a trying time of it. Though in his Sunday seclusion, at his nephew's down in Grubb Lane, he would, as has been said, express himself with freedom about

political questions, yet he ever had so cultivated all the outward signs of reverence for Ministers that the feeling itself became something of a reality to him, and with his kindly disposition, he really did evoke a liking for each new Minister, as he came. Thus, no Highlander was more devoted to the chief of his clan than was Walter Crane to the 'Excellency' that was for the time being presiding over the Water Bureau. Still, he had to accommodate himself to these rude events of the political world. He knew all about each crisis as it threatened. Time had a healing influence on his wounded feelings, and though he would have preferred to concentrate his devotion on one master, he loyally adapted it to all changes. A week ago he had carefully gone over the names of the Members from one of the printed lists, and, allowing for the possible consequences of the defection of our politician, with the current probabilities as to which he had made himself familiar, he had arrived at the conclusion that the fate of the Ministry was sealed, and that he must serve another lord. The division just taken had borne out his calculations.

As our politician was coming away from the House he found Crane, who had passed an exciting evening in the gallery, quietly standing near the Ministerial Room, waiting dutifully to the last for the bag of his dethroned chief. His naturally kind face, which always bore a pensive air, looked longer and sadder than ever. He bowed low as usual when he saw Frankfort coming.

'Well, Crane, it's all over. The Government are out,' remarked our politician.

'Out, your Honer?'

'Yes; out of office, you know, Crane.'

'Out of office, your Honer?'

'To be sure. Defeated by Sir Donald. He is the man now.'

'Well now, and look at that, your Honer. And the heavens be above us all—defend us! Them pensions, I suppose, your Honer?'

'Why, Crane, do you think the pensions wrong?'

'I, your Honer? What do I think? How should I know what to think about them abstruse sort of things?'

Only the people talking and rumouring about the General getting so many thousands, and country growing poorer.'

'Oh well, he won't get them now, Crane,' replied our politician, smiling to himself as he heard this favourite illustration of the *Sweet-Brier* reproduced.

'But I was only thinking,' said Crane, inclining his head to one side in such an inquiring manner that Frankfort, who was about to hurry away, had his attention arrested.

'Thinking? What about, Crane?

'I was only thinking about the Reservoir, your Honer.'

'The Reservoir? What on earth has it to do with the crisis, Crane?'

'Yes, your Honer, I was thinking—at least the Honorable Mr. Scully was just now saying among the crowd beyond, that now the country would have a grand policy of reproductive works. So we would be sure to have the Reservoir anyway, now—so we would, your Honer.'

Crane merely wished to say something polite and kind to console our politician, as from his quiet corner in the gallery he had observed the troubles that had beset him during the debate. So he addressed to him the most consoling topic he could think of.

'Well, as to that, Crane, we must wait to see who the new Minister for the Water Bureau is to be. They said in the House that Mr. Slater Scully was to be the man.'

'The Lord be praised!' ejaculated Walter Crane. However, he would have said as much for any new head of his Department.

But here Mr. M'Grorty came out of the Ministers' Room, where Mr. Brereton and his colleagues had been arranging to submit their resignations to the Governor next day, and gave to Crane the expected bag. He congratulated Frankfort upon his speech; but there seemed to be a hesitation about him, as if there was something more to be said, which led to their walking away together, joined by Mr. Brereton, who came out after M'Grorty as the impromptu Cabinet meeting was over. The Premier also congratulated him on his 'fair and square speech,' and declared that it came up like a breeze in the tropics, fresh and healthy, by the 'Lord Tomnoddie.'

‘Quite that,’ chimed in M’Grorty. ‘I was only going to observe, when the Premier joined us, that you will now have to consider on which side of the House you will sit when Sir Donald comes in. You have spoken for us on the two great questions of the session. I am sure you won’t desert us now that we are banished for the right cause.’

‘Oh, that’s all right, M’Grorty!’ exclaimed Brereton. ‘Let him pick out his own place to drop anchor. Don’t you, at any rate, bother,’ he added, giving Frankfort a friendly clap on the shoulder, ‘to shake hands with a certain person, however respectable, till you meet him. Time to think about that when old MacLever and his crew come back from the country.’

As they went down the street together, they discussed the incidents of the evening. The Premier appeared determined to be jolly in the circumstances. Perhaps he was not sorry to be released from the worries that go on accumulating the longer a man is in office. He nodded in a familiar way to Secker and Mons. Froessolecque, who hurriedly passed them, as much as to say, ‘All right, I *am* out. You and I know more about it than most people.’

He was quite good-humoured in his remarks about the different points in the debate.

‘Du Tell and Slater Scully were not bad. That point about the rate of wages was sharp—very—told too. Just the sort of thing to go down. Slater’s peroration too—posterity and his name on the roll, etc. etc. When I see him I will tell him that the only roll his name will appear on will be the roll of the new Ministry. Whether the eye of posterity will study that—query.’

‘And what about the Rangers then?’ inquired our politician. ‘If there are no pensions, how are they to be managed?’

‘Oh, that’s all right, my friend. That’s all right—or will be after a while. Wait a bit, and they’ll take up the Bill right enough, under some other name. Some time you will know all about how it’s done. By-by, I turn off here. The missus only excuses me, crisis or no crisis, while the House is actually sitting.’

Our politician, when he laid his head upon his pillow

that night, had at least the satisfaction of feeling that he had done his duty. At the same time, he had a growing sense of the difficulties that beset the position he had taken up. How would his constituents, who were against pensions, and the public take his action? And what would the Press say—the mouthpiece of the public? No doubt the Press was at times unjust to public men; indeed, it could scarcely help being so. It had to back up its own side. Certainly the *Sweet-Brier* was unjust to him in that unworthy suggestion about the amendment on the Woman's Bill. However, the morning papers would show. His stand-by was that he was doing his duty as a representative of the people. The way of duty had never been a primrose path.

It so happened that the papers were unusually late in coming the next morning, owing to the extra amount of matter occasioned by the report of the great debate. Our politician was thus kept in some suspense, waiting to be informed of the state of public feeling regarding the important and unusual position he had taken up. The *Rising Sun* came first, and he was quite disappointed to find that it had very little to say about him either way. It seemed to have overlooked the significance of his action, while it gave full prominence in clear type to the speeches that were devoted to the party attack and defence. It, however, gave a brief summary in lesser type of what he had said; and remarked that he had spoken in an intelligent manner. Indeed, so intelligently that when it appeared he was going to vote against his own party, the general feeling throughout the House was that he was more intelligent than intelligible. But he was more than satisfied with the *News Letter*, as it not only gave a fairly full report of his speech, but in its leading column rendered a passing recognition to 'Mr. Frankfort's evident desire to support what he believed to be for the public good, by whoever proposed.' Yes, that was just his case. The Press was not so bad after all. He had not yet seen the *Sweet-Brier*. It was very late in coming. When it came he opened it, rather expecting to find something severe. This is what he did find:—

Startling anomaly. Significant. The surprise and marvel of the evening was the enormous apostasy of the new Honourable

Member for Brassville, Mr. Frankfort. He betrayed his party in order to support the Tory Government *and* Pensions! No wonder that, as it is asserted, and we are assured correctly, he walked away after the division arm-in-arm with, not his own leader, the patriotic Sir Donald MacLever, but with the Tory Premier, Mr Brereton. The reasons that induced the honourable gentleman to take this unprecedented step he did not make very clear. Perhaps, indeed, it would not have been easy to do so, since, as Mr. Stoker pointed out in his well-argued and unanswerable speech, this same gentleman voted at the Pensions Inquiry Board *against* Pensions to the poor! To say the truth, he seemed, as might have been expected, ill at ease in making his speech. Its most emphatic point was the great need of having all appointments to the service of the State made only on their merits. Admirable doctrine surely! But what will be the astonishment, nay, horror of the intelligent people of this Province, when we tell them, on the most undoubted authority, that it is the habit of this same high-principled legislator, among other exercises of his public patronage, to nominate as letter-carriers in the post office men who can neither read nor write!!! As we proclaim it, *vox faucibus hæsit*. It seems to be incredible. Yet the particulars of at least one instance have been forwarded to this office by an indignant fellow-citizen of undoubted respectability. The name of the lucky, though illiterate, individual is Terence M'Glumpy; the post-office town Glooscap; the situation that of letter-carrier in His Majesty's Post Office in the town of Glooscap. And we take upon us to affirm, with a full sense of our responsibilities, that the aforesaid Terence M'Glumpy was appointed on the nomination of Mr. Frankfort, when he was unable to read either print or writing, and so could not decipher a single direction upon the letters that it was his duty to deliver to the much- and long-suffering inhabitants of Glooscap. We repeat, it seems incredible:

'Tis true, 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis, 'tis true.'
Pro Pudor!

If the public were expected to read this with astonishment and horror, there could be no doubt that our politician did in fact read it with those feelings. With all his good intentions, appearances were against him, and he did not seem to be getting on as quietly and as free from reproach as Meeks would have done. There was no denying that, though a Liberal, he had refused to follow the Liberal leader, Sir Donald, upon two important measures of the session. Then it was quite true that he did declare

against unqualified pensions to the poor on the commission. Yet he voted for pensions to the Rangers. Then there was that unpleasant fact that he had nominated as a letter-carrier a man who could neither read nor write. And there was the awkward episode of the letter to the Postmaster-General, to which he got no answer. Also, to be sure, he had walked away in friendly conference with the leader of the party he was opposed to. He might be conscious of his own innocence, but it did not follow that other people were. None can tell the concern with which an honest man sees for the first time his name proclaimed in print as being identified with dishonesty. Wounds by the steel or the bullet are not the only ones we suffer from—nor, perhaps, the most painful ones.

Our politician thought for a few minutes what he had better do, if anything. The well-recognised rule of wise men—lately enforced upon him by Myles Dillon—never to contradict criticisms, seemed scarcely to apply here, as the statement was so specific. It needed explanation, and then it could be substantially explained; though, to be sure, he was still to blame, perhaps, for not inquiring into the qualifications of M'Glumpy. Then, as to that note, had M'Grorty filed it? Would he remember it?

All difficulty as to the best course to take was obviated by the action of Mr. Stoker. When the House met, and Mr. Brereton announced that he and his colleagues only held office pending the appointment of their successors, the Member for Dead Hatch rose, he stated, to a question of privilege. Du Tell looked quite surprised, but turned to listen attentively. Mr. Stoker said that he wished to call attention to the audacious statement made about the Honourable Member for Brassville in the public press that morning, and which directly affected the honour of the whole House. He alluded to the paragraph in the *Sweet-Brier* to the effect that he, Mr. Frankfort, had nominated as a letter-carrier in the Post Office some person named M'Glumpy who could neither read nor write. He need scarcely say that such a statement must be wholly without foundation; but it would be only fair to his honourable friend, and, he might add, to the House, which was also concerned, that he, and

also the late Minister of Education and Public Knowledge and the Post Office, should give an explicit and unqualified contradiction to such an assertion.

Frankfort at once got up and stated that the paragraph in the *Sweet-Brier* was true except in some important points, namely, in not stating that he had no idea that the lad he recommended could not read or write, and in omitting to say that as soon as he ascertained that fact he had written to cancel his nomination. For greater promptitude he had written a personal note to the Minister direct. He presumed that the Minister would have acted upon it.

Mr. Du Tell here rose and begged leave to observe that the House would be gratified to hear the explanation of his honourable friend. It would make it complete if the Minister would kindly state that, on receipt of the personal letter which his honourable friend alluded to, he had stopped the appointment.

M'Grorty said that, on his attention being called to the statement in the press by Mr. Stoker earlier in the day, he had sent for the papers, and unfortunately the note cancelling the nomination that Mr. Frankfort alluded to was not among them. He had no doubt that he received it, but, not being official, he must have omitted to send it on; and the appointment being only a small one, he had put the whole thing out of his mind, and now forgot all about the facts.

Some Honourable Members were disposed to continue the discussion, but Sir Donald MacLever, in solemn tones, insisted that further debate would be unjustifiable at that stage, as there was no motion on the subject before the House. He laughed at the whole thing to himself, and thought it only useful for embarrassing our politician. His view was generally accepted. Honourable Members were too much interested in the possible developments of the crisis to care much whether M'Glumpy could read or could not. Du Tell, who wanted to make the worst of it, knew that the worst had come out. The nomination of a man who could not read was admitted, and as to the revocation, where was it? A private note, and that not among the papers! As a fact, he had no doubt that the note had been written as Frankfort stated; but, for the purpose of damag-

ing our politician with the public, there was all the material necessary. As for Frankfort, unscrupulous or tricky conduct was so foreign to his nature that even now he did not fully realise the ugly aspects that evil tongues might give and suspicious minds might accept from the incidents of this affair—the private note included. So the House adjourned, leaving on its reports the record of this unpleasant business.

The next morning the *Sweet-Brier* returned with redoubled vigour to the 'astounding admissions' of the Member for Brassville last night. Its amazement at these was only equalled by its consternation at the assertion that there was a private note sent to the Minister, forgotten by him and nowhere to be found.

It certainly had plausible ground to go on, and Mons. Froessolecque, or some other 'We,' made the most of it. It further appeared that the matter was exciting the most lively attention throughout the Province, for a large number of letters appeared in the columns of the *Sweet-Brier*, coming from the most distant and widely apart districts, from persons of all descriptions who were deeply and simultaneously affected by the incident. 'An Anxious Inquirer'; 'O Tempora! O Mores!'; 'Boss Tweed'; 'Perplexed'; 'Croker and Co.'; 'Indignant Letter-Carrier'; 'Surprised Lady Elector'; 'What Next?'—all these and others poured out their wounded feelings into the inky bosom of the *Sweet-Brier*.

Why is it that we are so unamiably constituted as to be ever ready to believe the worst of one another? If by chance one takes the opposite direction, and thinks and makes the best of what his fellow-men do, he himself is condemned as insincere, on the ground that no man could, in fact, feel as he professes to. Is it because we derive a secret pleasure from contemplating evil things in others from which we are free? or is it merely for the sake of pungent conversation? or is it because, as Robbie Burns has it, that, after all, men are an 'unco lot'? Whatever be the cause, certain it is that many in Excelsior took a bad view of the Glooscap incident, and quite relished the vigour and glow with which the *Sweet-Brier* had exposed another job of the politicians.

In due time Sir Donald formed the new Ministry, and the crisis was over. Du Tell got one of the junior places,

and generally it was composed of small men, as Sir Donald preferred to be himself the only considerable figure in any combination. The most popular appointment was that of now the Honourable Slater Scully, the Member for Biggleswade, as Minister of the Water Bureau. Though Walter Crane felt some uneasiness at transferring his allegiance from his old chief, it was a good deal mitigated by the fact that the new one was a man after his own heart, with a disposition at once jovial and generous. Slater Scully wished well to all men, but he could very imperfectly gratify his naturally kind impulses out of his private means. This difficulty vanished when he was able to draw, or promise to draw, upon the public. There was soon a vast increase of deputations, for all found the sunshine of hope when they came into the presence of the new Minister. One from Brassville, introduced by the Honourable Mr. Lamborn, wished to know what prospect there was of the Government undertaking the Reservoir by a special advance as 'a National work.' Slater Scully assured them, as he beamed seriously on them through the large glasses, that having given to that great project 'some of the best thought he was capable of,' they might consider it *un fait accompli* whenever European complications settled down, so as to allow the Government to 'launch a comprehensive loan to enable them to carry out their grand scheme of Reproductive Works for the nation.'

The Minister had an invincible repugnancy to pressing districts for the payment of overdue interest on advances, at least beyond the point of a letter full of very strong threats. He agreed to the Secretary, Lavender, writing any number of these, but made that official's life rather a trial to him by raising a variety of objections to taking any more effective means of enforcing his demands. Sometimes it was :

'Will you, my dear friend, explain by what process, official or demi-official, chemical or litigious, you propose to get blood out of a stone—to take the breeks from a Highlander?' Or it would be : 'Lavender, my right hand—but, thank Heaven! not my conscience-keeper—where is *your* conscience? I believe it is seared by long official injustice. Don't we know that these Bungletap Waterworks are so named, on the ancient principle *lucus a non lucendo*,

because there is no water in them. Look me in the face now and say if these hapless and soiled miners from Bungle-tap don't speak truly when they declare that the only tap in the district is in its name. They ask for water and you give them the stones of empty channels, and then, by the superior powers, ye want to charge them for the stones.'

'But, sir,' Lavender would reply, 'you must really allow me to point out that, though these works are partly a failure, they were the design of the District Board, for which they asked and got the Government money. The Government only ask for their own.'

'Well, and aren't we a Liberal Government? Any old screw can ask for his own. Why, even Blanksby, your own engineer, tells you that they don't get as much water as would moisten the invisible leg of a flea.'

Perhaps it would be a question of taking security for future payments and waiving present claims.

'My noble Secretary and coadjutor,' he would say, 'these poor lack-alls of Tumble Derry offer to you to levy at once a charge of one-sixth of a penny per thousand gallons—thirsty souls, they must have water—and to put the rest to a suspense account, sinking fund attached, irrevocable, inexorable, inflexible yearly payments *in futuro*; sealed bond, wax and parchment to suit.'

Here a stern expression swept over the kind face of the Minister as he looked down upon the Tumble Derry new conditions that lay before him on the table, and contemplated the heroic undertakings to pay in the future into the suspense account and sinking fund. Then he would continue:

'It may not be much, but 'tis their all. Have you the heart to refuse them?'

In all phases of official dealing where money was concerned there was the same liberal view of the difficulties that so often attend the payment of debts, and Lavender had a series of new experiences. Perhaps he would object to making an advance for further works to some locality that was not paying the interest on its present loan. To this official parsimony the large-souled minister would make answer:

‘True for you, Lavender—what you say is true. But you do not hearken to the plea of these sunburnt sons of the land of Obo. They plead—here is their humble petition : “The new works must be undertaken in order to make the old ones useful, and so produce enough to pay the interest upon the whole.” Where is your rebutter plea in answer to that? Where even your plea in abatement? These Oboites say : “Now we can pay you nothing. Have patience (and make a small further advance), and we will pay you all.” And yet you will not, but want to catch them by the throat, saying, “Pay me that thou owest.” No, no, Lavender,’ continued the statesman, varying his imagery, ‘let us on this occasion throw a sprat to catch a salmon. As we are now we will get neither sprat nor salmon. We don’t even get a bite,’ and he would look up through his glasses in a helpless manner at the Secretary.

Upon one occasion Lavender rather lost patience, and exclaimed, ‘Well, really, sir, I must say that as matters are going now we find all the districts come crying to the State like so many babies the first pinch they get!’

To which his imperturbable chief made answer, ‘And, my dear coadjutor, how can you find it in your heart to scold them? Are we not a maternal and paternal Government too? No, you deny the infant its first and most imprescriptible right to turn confidingly to the mother’s breast. Lavender,’ the Minister would continue, looking up through the spectacles on his Secretary, who could not help smiling with all his vexation—‘Lavender, let us be sweet Lavender this time. I am afraid that the official heart tends to become a hard one. Too true the sentiment of the poet, a man may smile and smile again, and yet—have a hard heart.’

Things would have come to a serious pass were it not that, when these generous arrangements came within the purview of Sir Donald as Treasurer, they entered a medium that was quite devoid of the sympathetic tone of the Water Bureau. Though even he was more liberal than Mr. Brereton, still his veto made many vague promises of the Minister of none effect, and the optimistic proposals of Mr. Slater Scully were subjected to a damaging scrutiny. But the tenor of his joyous official career was not marred

thereby; and even the deputations continued to like coming and being filled with fair promises and kindly hopes. So Slater Scully continued to the end to be a most popular Minister.

As for Walter Crane, he fully realised the popularity of his new chief, and endorsed the favourable public opinion about him. He even felt a reflected lustre on himself as he ushered in expected suppliants to the jovial presence, and afterwards conducted them downstairs rejoicing. He enjoyed all this, and really admired the Minister's generous ways. At the same time, in the recesses of Grubb Lane, he would be slightly critical, and when his nephew asked him what the new boss was like, he replied :

‘An’, to tell ye the truth, he’s a real fine gentleman ; and he speaks so nice and tender-like, and cockers them all up with promises. An’ it’s he who would pay everybody’s debts, if he could, and his own too, to be sure. But between you and me and the bank, when it comes to getting the cheque, I would rather have it signed by some one else.’

It may be well here briefly to trace out what happened about the proposed reform of the Rangers. Sir Donald found that his victory over Brereton and the agency by which he had won it left two matters upon his hands that he must deal with—one the reorganisation of the Rangers, the other the satisfaction of the demands of Secker Secretary for the workers. He was too clear-headed a man not to know that the Rangers must be ‘tackled before long,’ as he expressed it. Further troubles took place on the Border, and the public began to say that something must be done. When the public say this in earnest, public men are apt to go and do it. That a thing is the right thing to do is, after all, a great fact in politics. Then, as to the concessions to the workers which Secker demanded, Sir Donald did not trouble himself about the abstract reasons in their favour. What he did know was that it would be practical wisdom to make such concessions as would secure a compromise with Secker. He determined to deal with both difficulties in the one Bill ; and next session, when the excitement of the previous year had subsided, he brought in ‘a Bill intituled an Act to amend the State Workers’ Regulation Act, and to provide

compensation in certain cases and for other purposes.' This Bill with regard to the civil side of the army of State workers conceded several of the demands that Secker had made, and in particular provided compensation in the shape of retiring allowances in case of accident or ill-health, and also in certain other events. In Part II. of the Bill, which dealt with the Border Rangers, these principles were a little extended, as was natural considering the dangerous nature of the occupation, and those who were wounded or disabled by sickness or otherwise, and also those who had reached a certain age, had 'allowances' secured to them, which practically became pensions. Slater Scully always called it 'The People's Compensation Bill.'

Secker was satisfied that he had got as much as he could at present secure, and he influenced Mons. Froessolecque and the *Sweet-Brier* by assuring him that the principle of the Bill necessarily led to a generous system of old age pensions for all the wage-earners. Parliament had got tired of the subject, and wanted it settled some way. Some of Brereton's supporters urged him to denounce the whole thing as being his proposals thinly disguised. But he declined to commit infanticide, as he said, upon his own child. If he did such a thing it would be upon some one else's. So the Bill passed quietly, and the Border Rangers and Secker were settled for the present.

The only point about which some Members who were always giving trouble raised any question was the expense. In fact, they asked what it cost to pay for the increases and concessions on the civil side, which had nothing to do with the reform of the Rangers. Old Mr. Brandreth said it would come to over £100,000 a year, and was going on in his slow way to object to this expenditure, when Mr. David Stoker called out, 'Well, what if it does?' He was disconcerted at this, and could only reply, as he generally did to such interruptions, 'Why—that is what I want to know.' On this Mr. Stoker called out, 'Whatever it is, is it not all wages spent among ourselves? It all comes back to us, don't it?'

The cheers that broke forth from the Populist Members in support of this view prevented Mr. Brandreth from

collecting his thoughts, so as to pursue the thread of his argument, and he sat down after a few discursive remarks about its not being their own money that they were spending. He was observed to be moving about restlessly in his seat when he had sat down, the fact being that an answer to Stoker's interjection had just struck him. It came too late for the debate ; but afterwards he went into the smoking room, and finding there Stoker and Caffery and several Populist Members, with all of whom he was personally friendly, he challenged them again upon the point, in the hope of recovering the position which he had lost owing to David Stoker's interjection.

'After all, there is nothing in David's notion,' he said, 'about the money being spent in the country. I see the answer to that, though it did not strike me at the time.'

'Pitch it out, then, old friend, if you have it about you,' David Stoker exclaimed in an encouraging manner.

'Why, you might as well say that £100,000 a year would be well spent in wages to men to dig trenches in the sand at low tide which would be filled again each day as the tide came in, because it was wages, and would come back to us. At least that is how it strikes me.'

They all laughed at Brandreth's argument and his still bewildered air ; but when he left to go into the House again, Stoker remarked to the others that he did think him an honest old fellow, and that he really believed what he said. In the event everything ended satisfactorily. There was, of course, the Bill to be paid—by that impersonal friendless entity, the Public.

This episode of the Rangers and their pensions, commonplace incident though it was in everyday politics, seemed to our politician, looking back upon it, to present some topics that were worthy of thinking over.

The weapon used by Sir Donald to fight this battle, the popular hatred of pensions, was an instance of the force of inherited feeling. The abuses of the English system of pensions in the past, and especially the fact that it was worked in the interest of the aristocracy, have created, by the process of continuous experience, in English peoples, wherever situated over the globe, an instinctive popular

prejudice against all official pensions. Jacob Shumate had the sympathies of the little crowd in Glooscap in his favour when he denounced the pension of £1 a week to Sandy M'Givern, and Sir Donald in his wider sphere was able to win with it too. That the adverse feeling was one inherited from the experience of aristocratic abuses was shown by the fact that pensions for the mere poor were the most popular and advanced thing that any man could propose. There was obviously no sense in the cry against pensions as pensions. Apart from the prejudice, it was simply a question of what was the best business arrangement to make in order to get efficient service.

But though the cry did its work at the time, the common-sense of the community prevailed in the end. The incident in this aspect represents the true hope of the popular dispensation under which we live. It would be too much to expect that men would not make mistakes. We look to the general intelligence in due time correcting them, pursuant to that divine law that ordains the steady general onflow of human progress, though not without occasional eddies backward. And this general intelligence depends upon and is mainly directed by experience. In *Excelsior* the continued disturbances on the Border largely contributed to the result.

And here was to be observed a weak point in our popular system. Experience teaches. But who is to enforce upon a people its teaching? In the main they are left to find out its lessons for themselves. True, it is the duty of public men to proclaim the truth, if need be, in reproof of popular mistakes. But who among public men is ready to undertake this useful work—useful to others, but not safe or profitable for himself? When it was found necessary in *Excelsior* to put the Rangers on a sound basis, it was all done quietly. Those who were behind the scenes knew that the people had made a mistake, and that the mistake was being reversed. But the thing was never pressed home to the people.

In China there is a Board of Magistrates, said to be independent, who are entitled to criticise even the doings of the Emperor. Some years ago this Board made a remon-

strance to His Majesty on the wasteful cost of some celebrations that had been held in his honour while, as they urged, whole provinces were suffering from famine. But the Emperor rebuked them for their boldness, and handed them over for punishment to the proper authorities. Their heads were cut off. And if it is unbecoming in subordinates to lecture an Emperor, who is entitled to lecture a people? So they go unchastened by rebuke. What if there had been in Excelsior some daring politician to speak plainly to the public? He would have said, 'My fellow-countrymen of this province, you did a foolish thing in causing the first Rangers Bill to be rejected. Many of you were indifferent about your political duties, and did nothing, while several of you were simply humbugged by the cry about aristocratic pensions. You now see the results of your mistake. Like wise men, take a note of this, and don't be so easily misled another time!' The daring politician would share the fate, in another form, of the censorious Board of China. Thus it is that, though peoples learn from experience, they do so only in an imperfect way, and are slow to withdraw their confidence from men who have misled them, if they continue to please them for the present. The lessons from political experience are like those from Nature—felt, not proclaimed; silent, though pitiless.

The power of the Press in our time was also brought home to our politician. It was become a part of the representative system, and was even more powerful than the political side, as it represented general public opinion and not alone the voice of the ballot-box. It partook too of the weaknesses of the system to which it belonged; but it had the merit of being open to all and of voicing the wants and ideas of all. No man can be wronged by power in secret and unheard, if there is a free press; and if the press itself wrongs a man, it does so openly, and it too is to be judged by the opinion of all. When it abuses its high prerogative, people come to know of it, and in time wrong works its own remedy.

But the most impressive fact which the inner history of this movement taught was the political power of the State

workers. The social consequences that follow from the State having a large number of its citizens in its industrial employment have been considered by thoughtful writers, but not the political consequences. The more Democracies enlarge the scope of State employment, the more dominant becomes the Industrial Prætorian Corps. They are united; they are free from the distraction of the social struggle, for the State provides for them; they have devoted leaders, and are able to concentrate the energy that others have to expend on getting a living, upon securing what they judge is fair from their employer—the State. Governments come and go, but they remain a permanent body. Their claims are the more irresistible politically, because in addition to their direct power, theirs are claims by the worker and the wage-earner upon the capitalist. Nor can we blame them for looking after their own interests. When the Socialist ideal of the State employing all is realised, where would Government be under Democracy? All would be struggling for themselves, and there would be no strong centre of authority to regulate the rival claimants for the State bounty. Advanced Socialists realise this, and decline to admit that the Government under Socialism will be Democratic. Their ideal of the future is a benevolent despotism, so long as it is the despotism of the man in the street.

Our politician had a personal lesson, too, on the circumspection that public conduct demands. The only thing that he could be blamed for in nominating Terence M'Glumpy was the natural oversight of not personally ascertaining that he was able to read and write. But who would have thought it necessary in such a country as Excelsor to make the inquiry? Yet, for want of it, what a plausible ground of attack was given to the *Sweet-Brier*! One should learn, he concluded, not to take to heart railing accusations in public affairs; but still more carefully should he study to avoid even the appearance of deserving them.

Finally, the difficult question was raised, how far a politician is entitled, or required, to insist upon his own opinion on public questions. How much weight ought a practical man to give to that peremptory question of Sir Donald's:

'*Can't* you see that the people are in *no* humour for pensions?'

That politician regarded this as conclusive. Even Solon did not claim to give the best laws to the Athenians, but only the best that they could bear. This is a difficult and many-sided problem, which admits of a wide range of solutions from that of the conscious political rogue who is busy hunting after the spoils, to that of the man possessed by a high ambition to be useful in his day. The people's will certainly must prevail, but should not the people have the benefit of the truthful expression of the opinions of their public men before they decide? If so, should men be banished from political life for saying truly what they think? Is it a sound system that compels men not alone to refrain from giving true advice to the people, but further, to themselves give the weight of their apparent personal belief in whatever may be, from time to time, to the fore, as the successful thing? There is a screw loose in all this, thought our politician.

But the merry time of Christmas was now approaching, and a truce was proclaimed to politics and its perplexities. This time was as welcome amidst the sunshine of the new land as it is among the snows of the old; and it was especially pleasing to Frankfort, as he proposed to relax himself after the perplexities of the session and the labours of the lecture-room, by going for a holiday to The Blocks, as Mrs. Lamborn had proposed. He had no doubt of a kindly reception from all his friends at Brassville, though it was undeniable that his Parliamentary career so far had somewhat disappointed several of his well-wishers in the constituency. Mr. Lamborn could not understand what he meant by differing from his party and backing up Brereton, who had been so niggardly about the rabbits; while Mrs. Lamborn, though she never touched mere politics, was disappointed that he did not, as she had suggested in her letter, make a long speech to turn the other man out. She had an inward feeling that he was getting no nearer to the peerage. Hedger, the lawyer, considered that he had shown himself to be impracticable; but Neal Nickerson, the school-master, argued that he was quite right to contradict his

friends if they were wrong. Barney Clegg, of the Brown Jug, maintained that his action in favouring pensions showed that he was no friend to the people, the more particularly so as his own name had not yet appeared in any new roll of justices. Karl Brumm, though hating pensions much, yet had such an innate sense of the need of military discipline, that in the end he excused our politician, while at the same time he smiled in a superior way at all such feeble attempts at soldiering. But, on the other hand, Jacob Shumate gave up our politician as past praying for, being now clearly identified with pensions and the wrongful financial institutions of modern society. He was thus quite convinced that, so far from seeking to induce the Minister to disallow Sandy M'Givern's pension, he had actually advised him the other way ; and as he sat in his cottage in Glooscap brooding over the matter of an evening, when the children were in bed and he was alone, he recalled several small circumstances that, now when he looked back upon them, quite bore out this conclusion. To his dying day he retained a firm belief, founded on his own reason as to what was likely, that Frankfort had seen the Minister, and by some legal quibble induced him to put a wrong construction on those sections of the Act relating to the power to disallow the wrongful expenditure of corporate funds. M'Glumpy senior was rather hurt upon reading the statement of our politician that he had withdrawn his nomination of Terence upon such a trifling ground as that the boy had not completed his education. But on reflection he came to the conclusion that this must only be a Parliamentary way of putting things, as, in fact, nothing had come of this withdrawal, and the lad had been established as the official letter-carrier of Glooscap. He had begun learning to read, and meanwhile the neighbours got their letters pretty much as they did before, and he cleaned up the place for his aunt and went with special letters where he was sent. None of the neighbours were so ill-natured as to object. So the public were satisfied. On the whole, Mr. M'Glumpy enjoyed the incident in all its phases, took any adverse comments of the Press with the equanimity of an old politician, and regarded with interest the discussion in Parliament about it as tending

generally to the importance of the clan M'Glumpy, of which he was the chief.

Several of our politician's constituents supported him ; and Woodall, the bookseller, used to argue with some of the dissatisfied ones, when they came for the city papers, and point-blank say that even Harry there, his blundering shop-boy, could see that the Pensions cry was merely a political blind. Miss Gazelle and Seth Pride were sadly put out about the Pensions, but overlooked all in consideration of Frankfort's noble stand for the emancipation of woman. Besides, though the late Premier had fallen away on the Pensions, were they to forget that it was he who had brought in the Emancipating Bill ? Also a few independent electors, without going into the merits of the question, defended the Member on the ground that there was no doubt that he had done what he believed to be the right thing. Among these last must be classed Eilly Lamborn, her only contribution to the animated discussions that took place upon the subject at The Blocks being the remark that she did not see why a man should not say what he thought, even though he was in Parliament.

'My dear young lady,' remonstrated Hedger, the lawyer, 'a man goes there to say what other people think.'

However, they were all glad to see him, especially Mr. and Mrs. Fairlie and the cousins, who were often at The Blocks, though Mr. Fairlie, while he personally agreed with his nephew's views, was beginning to fear that they would not pay in a business aspect. But pleasure ruled the hour. Picnics, dinner-parties, dances, concerts made days and nights fly by. As for politics, and Frankfort's supposed desertion of his party, they could not be wholly avoided in conversation, nor was it possible to escape some natural joking about the unique M'Glumpy appointment. Neal Nickerson repeated, more than once, an offer to teach young M'Glumpy free at his school, to read and write, 'wholly on national grounds, for the sake of my country,' he would observe, and then look round in the confident belief that he had made a joke. Once, when they were all gathered round the piano to hear Miss Corney sing 'Faithful and True,' by

the author of 'Life's Lullaby,' Hedger thought that he made a good point by saying aside to Miss Lamborn, who was standing with Frankfort near: 'Ah, "faithful and true," that's what Sir Donald wants *him* to be. But he is faithless, and—Sir Donald is in tears.'

Eilly Lamborn disliked the tone in which Hedger spoke, and as she and Frankfort sat down on a sofa when the song was over, said to him in her open, explicit manner: 'Now, tell me what is this that father and they are all talking about. They say, do you know, that you deserted your party. But did you really do such a thing as that?' and she looked straight at him with her trustful eyes.

'I did what I thought right, Miss Lamborn,' he replied.

'Then how is it that they all say that you did wrong? Father and Mr. Hedger, and even Mr. Keech, partly. Father, you see, said, when I said that a man should say what he thought—father said positively that he was no use to his party if he did not think as they did.'

'Then you defend my saying what I think.'

'No, I don't know that I really do, if, you see, you are in Parliament. But then, to be sure, one ought to speak truly wherever they are. But Mr. Hedger says no.'

'Well, I say what you say. So we agree,' replied Frankfort, not heeding the argument much, but interested in her earnestness.

'Yes; that is very right. But do you know what Mr. Keech said, when I told him about Mr. Brookfield saying that a politician must choose between being popular and being useful.'

'Why, surely he approved of making a right choice?'

'No, what he said was this: that if a man did not take care he might end by being neither popular nor useful.'

'Really?'

'Yes, and you know what a good old man he is,' said Eilly Lamborn, looking up at Frankfort, as if she deprecated any disparaging criticism on his remarks.

'You see, he put it this way. This is what he said—he said that a man to be useful must be popular, in a way at least, you know.'

'Ah well, Miss Lamborn, I am afraid I could not live

up to Mr. Keech's mark. It is no great purpose to be popular merely, is it ?'

'Yes, just so,' said Eilly Lamborn in a musing way. 'But you see you are there—in Parliament, I mean. I know,' she added, with a laugh, 'that I should not care to be anywhere I could not speak as I thought.'

'Well, Miss Lamborn, I must say that I deeply appreciate your way of looking at the subject. Indeed, it is exactly my own. You asked me just now to explain my position to you. But you seem to me to understand it yourself. Often, indeed, a high moral instinct leads us better on such questions than mere argument.'

But here he observed a changed expression pass over the honest countenance that was looking up at him—an expression of disappointment, almost of pain. Some new and evidently disparaging reflection was passing through the mind of Eilly Lamborn. What could it be? She seemed to hesitate. He turned towards her with sympathetic attention, as if to assist the expression of this new idea.

The fact was that, when he had spoken of the high moral instinct, the M'Glumpy incident had at once occurred to her. She had only heard the ill-natured version of it—that it was done to pay for the M'Glumpy votes. To talk of high morality after this seemed to savour of hypocrisy. If Eilly Lamborn could hate anything, she hated hypocrisy.

At last she said, in an accusing tone: 'But how, *then*, could you appoint that letter-carrier, who could not read, whatever his family had done for you?' The '*then*' evidently applied to his high moral tone.

'Gracious Heavens, you don't suppose, Miss Lamborn, that I did it knowingly? I took it for granted that, like all the boys about, he had been to school. I cancelled my nomination the moment I knew. Really, I am surprised that you——'

'Now, Eilly, you have got into another of your long arguments about sermons or something, I suppose. And here is Mr. Hedger waiting for you to play his song. You know,' Mrs. Lamborn continued, turning to Frankfort—'you know, Mr. Hedger says that she is the only one who plays the accompaniment properly to his song "Good Men and True."'

There was one thing that Frankfort could not help noticing whenever political matters came up in conversation, and that was that Eilly Lamborn was the one of the party who realised clearly that the abstract question of right or wrong, principle or no principle, did come into the consideration of the subject. It evidently came naturally to her—to be sure, a girl's view—though she spoke little, leaving the arguments to Hedger and Neal Nickerson, with her father coming in every now and then as umpire. Hedger regarded the whole thing as a game, and concluded that it was obvious that if a man went into any game he must play according to the rules. Neal Nickerson agreed to this conclusion, but said that, as Hedger stated it, it was quite misleading, for that man had a right to dispute any rules that he thought wrong and try to get them altered; but he agreed that, so long as the rules stood, all should play the game in the same way. Mr. Lamborn thought simply that a man should stick to his party and do the best for his district. All concurred that if a man did go into politics it must be for some intelligible object. Mrs. Lamborn thought a peerage. But Eilly Lamborn seemed to have the innate idea that truthfulness and sincerity were as right in politics as in everyday life.

This sympathy of feeling upon any subject—religion, music, literature, politics—between a young woman and a young man is very apt to develop into something deeper and fonder still. It brings together and forms close unions even between men. And then it is in holiday hours and country scenes like these now at The Blocks—not in the glare of the ballroom, for a few hours' interval amidst business life—that young hearts are apt to grow fond. Life seems then so bright and easy. We naturally turn to pleasant visions. And the keen, though apparently languid, observation of Mrs. Lamborn, whose whole soul was wrapped up in her only child, soon discovered a possible danger, for danger she was coming to regard it, the more she heard of the conversations upon politics, and Frankfort's odd views about them. It seemed less and less likely that he would succeed at them, as she had hoped he would. And did she want her dear child married to a man who was a failure?

Personally she liked him well enough, and, like a good wife, was anxious to be civil to him, as he was a brother legislator of her husband's ; but she could not help thinking that the brilliant young American, Mr. Fooks, who was coming to stay next week, would be a better man to encourage. Certainly the Ethereal Starch Company, which he had come over to manage in Excelsior, did not sound in any way aristocratic ; but then he was said to belong to one of the F.F. (first families) of Virginia—more ancient, in fact, than Lord Kilgour's, which only came into notice at the time of the Union with Ireland. The good lady, as was natural, secretly confided her views to her husband, who much respected her superior wisdom in such matters. But he was disposed to take rather a different view of the situation, as he thought it was quite possible that, after getting a little experience, Frankfort would prove after all to be a successful man. However, he agreed to her suggestion that he should not on this occasion be asked, as had been intended, to prolong his stay into the following week, for the purpose of meeting the popular young American. But he did this rather unwillingly, and said that Frankfort, at any rate, was as much a gentleman as any of them, and that whenever he visited the district he would be always glad to entertain him, 'starch or no starch.'

'Well, you need not be vulgar about it, in any case, Tom,' was the just rebuke with which Mrs. Lamborn closed the curtained conference.

When Frankfort, hearing no suggestion for the prolonging his stay, announced his plans for departure, Eilly suggested to her mother that she should prevail upon him to wait, as was arranged at first, to meet Mr. Fooks, as they would be good company together, and it would be fun to hear them arguing. But the mother skilfully excused herself by saying that she did not feel her heart strong enough to 'entertain all the people together,' as she put it, in a general way, and that he must come and stay with them next winter when things were quieter. As her mother did suffer from weak action of the heart, Eilly said not another word.

He left them, then, at the end of the week. At breakfast the day before he went away the old question about

politics suddenly came up again, introduced by Hedger, who had ridden over early to get Mr. Lamborn's signature to a notice of appeal under the Rabbit Assessment Act. Eilly Lamborn broke in more positively this time, and rather confusedly, with her view that it was a right and true thing for a man to say what he thought. Mr. Hedger was just beginning his reply in the usual way, 'My dear young lady——' when Eilly exclaimed, slightly flushing, that, as she could not explain clearly what she meant, and as Mr. Frankfort had to go away, she would write her views and send them to him. This idea annoyed Mrs. Lamborn, but she was too kind a mother to say much. So she only remarked—'Well, Eilly, you are always doing something odd, so Mr. Frankfort will not be surprised when he gets your reasons and writings and things about politics.'

'Why, Mrs. Lamborn,' he said, quite truthfully, 'the writing will only be a continuation of this conversation, and I am sure it has been nothing but pleasant.'

They all parted most kindly. Frankfort never suspected that any coolness lurked beneath the tranquil manner of Mrs. Lamborn. He could not but feel, yet he scarcely owned to himself, the spell that Eilly Lamborn, unconsciously on her part, seemed for the time at least to cast over him by her noble natural insight into the higher view of human life, and, to be sure, also by that delightful open and sincere manner, and especially by the magic of that eye. It is a terrible organ the eye, for the sway it can establish at certain times. He recalled the words of his Burns—

She charm'd my soul I wist na how ;
And ay the stound, the deadly wound
Cam frae her een sae bonnie blue.

But as he rolled away in the train, he began to recover himself. He repressed tender feelings, for he knew that his position was precarious, and was beginning to think that his career might not be destined to be what is commonly considered a very successful one. And he held that it was not only unwise, but dishonest, to contract obligations in the most serious affair of life without a reasonable prospect of being able to meet them.

CHAPTER VII

PROGRESSIVE LEGISLATION

THE history of the political and social movements in Excelsior is instructive as showing how the forces that are at work in our time operate in an advanced community of intelligent and prosperous men, placed amid conditions of perfect freedom, relieved from old-world trammels, starting afresh upon their national career, and able from the easy conditions of their life to try what experiments they please, not alone in matters of political Government, but in the more perplexing sphere of industrial life. The Province dated from its infancy scarcely three generations. The pioneers were hardy and enterprising emigrants who won and made their home in the primeval forests. They started fairly together, equally poor, their little world of enterprise open to all alike, with no distinction between them except, indeed, that fundamental and determining difference that Nature makes when she drops the baby into the cradle. At first they were wholly occupied with the struggle to secure their footing in the new land, and to control to their use its great natural capabilities. As time went on and new immigrants came in, from all the nations of Europe, but chiefly from Britain, which they proudly claimed as their motherland, their attention became more directed to the form of Government under which it would please them to live. The home authorities gave them full scope to constitute this as they liked, and to alter it as often and in whatever manner they thought best. If they even desired to separate altogether from the Empire and set up a Republic of their

own, no serious objection would, at that time, have been raised. They were far away at the Antipodes, and had their fortunes within their own grasp.

It is not in many periods of man's history that we can see such an experiment tried. A civilised, instructed people, sprung from a race with such noble political traditions as the English, placed in a new and bountiful land, and left to mould their institutions at their own pleasure. They were free from the hard conditions of life that weigh down peoples in old lands. They had no smouldering religious feuds, ever ready to burst into flame at the breath of bigotry or faction ; no perplexing problems of race ; no privileged classes with ancient vested rights ; no antiquated institutions, burdensome to retain, yet difficult to pull down ; no army or navy to support ; no foreign relations to distract their energies or tax their pockets. They had no pauper masses, the sad inheritance from past ages. If there were to be the poor among them, they must produce them from themselves. They had an abundance of land, fertile to cultivate, and possessing also other elements of wealth—coal, iron, silver, timber. Their climate was gracious to man, enabling him to live and work in the open air the whole year through, not hindered by an inclement winter, as in the other hemisphere. They were free from many deadly forms of disease, which in the long centuries of man's habitation had been ineradicably acclimatised in the old world. The kindly observer, seeing these things, might well apply to the new settlers the ancient benediction : 'May the gods grant you long life ! As for all other good gifts, they are already your own.'

The form of their Government soon naturally engaged the attention of the settlers. This was moulded upon English lines and upon popular principles, as they were then understood. The Queen, operating through her agent, the Governor, was the head of the Government. This royal framework of the Executive gives a tone or style to the most extreme forms of popular rule. They constituted two chambers of the Legislature, in one of which all the men of the Province were represented equally ; while in their Senate they sought to give effect to what philosophical Liberals, such as Mackintosh, Mill, and de Tocqueville, lay

down as essential to the success of Democracy—the principle of some centre of resistance to the immediate impulse of the popular vote, so as to give the public time to ascertain what the settled will of the people was. But soon more advanced ideas prevailed, and their Senate, which had been representative of only a part of the people, was turned into a Nominee Chamber, to which the people's Government appointed men who could be relied upon not to obstruct or delay the carrying out of the people's wish. Soon universal suffrage, equal electoral districts, the ballot, payment for members of both Houses, and short Parliaments gave the Government into the hands of the male population of the Province. All remnants of exclusiveness, or privilege to property or social position, were swept away. All stood level before the ballot-box, the man of thousands casting in his one vote upon equal terms with the day-labourer.

But still the political machine was felt to be incomplete. A generous sentiment soon called for the concession to women of equal political power with men; and soon the electoral rolls of Excelsior were doubled by the inclusion of the wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters of the Province.

After these reforms something was yet felt to be wanting—indeed, much was felt to be wanting. The enthusiasm of the people for their Parliament did not increase as they came to be more completely identified with it. It may seem strange that this should be so, but such was the fact. Defects appeared clearer upon closer acquaintance. There was among the public no submissive deference, such as their fathers felt in the old land for the Parliament, placed as it was at a distance above them, to restrain too independent a scrutiny into its failings. The people were directly mixed up with the institution, and perhaps found in it a reflex of their own infirmities. They saw through the so-called party system, which in their young industrial community meant the contest between the ins and the outs. The Populist or Socialist element, which was a real power, owing to its aggressive qualities and its ceaseless activity, complained that they were not able to get their social reforms carried out promptly. Parliament, they averred, often trifled with those reforms, taking them up for party

purposes and then neglecting them, or adopting them in some mangled shape owing to political considerations.

One of the more advanced proposals for coping with the evil was to abolish this same Party Government, and have affairs carried on by a standing committee of the House of Representatives that would be always ready to do what the public wanted. But the more popular project was to have, in one form or another, direct legislation by the people; though in *Excelsior* they had not reached the still more advanced stage that some American States have arrived at, which prohibit their Legislatures from meeting at all oftener than once in so many years. In *Excelsior* the desire was to have the ultimate decision upon proposed laws resting with the direct popular vote. In passing, it may be remarked that the ideal towards which advanced democracies are now tending is that of a central authority, absolute in its scope of action, but dependent upon the people for periodical election, which would promptly carry out the measures of social relief that are now the chief concern of peoples, political power having been won. The feeling is that Parliaments have had their day. The enthusiasm for individual liberty has cooled. The need for it is not so much felt; while impatience at delays in getting what is wanted suggests the practical advantage of a benevolent and popular despotism. In this feeling we are coming back to older times. The social reformers in France in the middle of the eighteenth century, who propounded wise measures for ameliorating the lot of the people, which, if adopted, might even have saved the French Monarchy, always maintained that these could be best carried out under an absolute king. The Manchester school, which was for giving votes to the masses, left them to find bread for themselves.

In *Excelsior* it was not long before the inevitable trend of modern democracy to make politics a social science was made plain. The political constitution of the little community was changed and changed again, modified and expanded at pleasure, till all men and women voted as they pleased, and nominated delegates to do their bidding. Not a vestige of caste or class remained. No one was born superior to any one else. Even the few who were better off

than the rest were a constantly changing quantity, being continually and rapidly recruited from below, and they, or at least their children, evermore tumbling down into the crowd.

Yet life remained a troublesome matter even in this new land and under such conditions. After all was done that could be done to complete the political machine, things still went awry on the social side of life. There was no such poverty as in older lands appals thinking men. On the contrary, wages were higher and the necessities of life lower than in most other parts of the world. Still, unquestionably some men were able to jump upon the shoulders of the rest and gain position and affluence at the top ; while others, and they not idle men either, had to toil on for their daily bread, and, even in Excelsior, at exceptional times, found difficulty in getting the work at the established wage by which they could win this bread. Why should this be so ? is a question that any man can readily ask, but to which a direct answer is not so easy to give. At least, while you may state the reasons for the fact, there is more difficulty in showing the justification for the reasons. But when the less fortunate, who are the great majority, have power placed in their hands by a system which proclaims that all men are equal, when they ask this question it is evident that they will not be contented with any mere scholastic treatment of the problem. They will set themselves to remedy this faulty state of things if they can. And whether they will abolish or will tolerate industrial freedom, with its necessary incident, competition, upon which modern society so far rests, depends upon whether it can be so moulded as to make the worse off, or at least a large proportion of them, personally interested in preserving it.

But, as regards Excelsior, only the initial stage of the contest had been reached. The people had power, and being dissatisfied with mere political results, turned all their energy to the task of improving the lot of the toilers by labour laws and by Government assistance. Politics were merged in social effort—the effort to turn to useful account those new and all-powerful forces that were now vested in the people.

Much that tended in this direction had been accomplished already. A simple narrative of what had been so far done would impress any observer who came from the heavily-laden populations of the old world. From the first the people of Excelsior had been impressed by the truth, which was so frequently proclaimed by the early social reformers, that ignorance was one of the prime causes of poverty; and they had early established in the Province a system of free, secular, and compulsory education, under which the present generation of the people had been brought up. It was free even to the extent of finding books and slates for the poorer children, and also under special circumstances paying a small sum to the parents to defray the cost of sending them to school. Liberal scholarships were provided to help promising students to go on to the William Dorland University. Expense was not heeded in carrying out the system. Wherever a few settlers' huts, a store, and a blacksmith's shop were to be found throughout the bush, they were followed by a school. Want of a sufficient supply of good land for the people to work upon has ever been considered another pregnant cause of poverty. This difficulty did not exist for the people of Excelsior. They had more than they knew what to do with. It was given all over the Province at a nominal rent, that after a few years purchased the freehold, to those who undertook to settle upon it and to carry on cultivation. The laws were so framed as to exclude the capitalist, and give it to the poor man whose labour was his property. In bad seasons the payment of the rent was postponed. Railways were made by the Government at a vast cost over the Province, to bring the produce of the land to market; and were worked by the State, without regard to profit, for the purpose of giving a cheap service to the public, and also so as to maintain a good standard of wages for the employees.

After a while the distance from the seaboard and the metropolis was, railways notwithstanding, held to be too heavy a handicap to the producer. Some large estates of the best lands were accumulated in the natural course of events. So laws were passed taxing specially large holdings, and also enabling the Government to buy, if need be com-

pulsorily, good properties near the best markets, and to lease them out to the people upon easy terms of long-dated payments. Large sums were borrowed in Europe to carry out this policy.

Cheap money is often a want in industrial work. The Government of Excelsior borrowed large sums, lent it out to the small farmers, and made the repayment extend over a prolonged term of years. To further assist the worker, small contracts to clear forest lands were let out to the unemployed, and the cleared parts were then leased to them in perpetuity at a rent that was to pay, ultimately, the cost of the contracts. Bonuses were given for special agricultural products. Stores to facilitate their export were erected at the cost of Government, and a Minister of Lands and Agriculture, assisted by a staff of experts, gave all practical help and instruction to the workers in prosecuting their industry. Similar aid was given to the mining industry by the Minister of Mines and his experts. A large yearly endowment was paid to the Local Boards throughout the country to assist in making roads, promoting local improvements, and affording employment. The Public Works Department also expended money obtained by loans freely upon national works throughout the Province.

But the chief attention of the Government and Legislature was bestowed upon the people in the towns. It was held that there must be a diversity of occupation for the young, and to promote this a strong system of Protection was adopted. Whatever could be made in the country was prevented from being imported. Several factories sprang up, giving employment to many; but as production increased, and they could not produce so cheaply as to be able to export, falling profits led to declining wages and to generally unsatisfactory conditions of employment. Thereupon what was considered the most advanced Factory Act in the world was passed. All factories were put under strict Government inspection. A minimum wage was fixed, and the further arrangement of wages was handed over to Boards. Home work was discouraged to the utmost, and all articles made in private dwellings had to be labelled. The hours of work were strictly limited, and numerous

provisions, including directions for holidays, were made to protect the workers of all ages. A change truly from the time when children under ten used to be found upon the forms asleep from the exhaustion of their twelve or fifteen hours' a day toil!

The Industrial, Conciliation, and Arbitration laws enabled seven workpeople to bring the employer before the Board to answer any complaint, and compelled the settlement of industrial disputes by the appointed tribunals. The Employers' Liability Act protected the wage-earner, as far as possible, from injury. Numerous laws provided for the supervision of shipping and the safety of seamen. The Master and Apprentice Act guarded the young; the Coal Mines Act regulated the coal mines; the Servants' Registry Act, the engagement of servants; the Contractors' and Workmen's Lien Act gave a lien over property to those who had done work upon it; while the Wages' Attachment Act prevented wages of less than £2 a week from being attached for the debt of the wage-earner. Shops were not overlooked. The hours that they could be kept open were fixed by law, and all had to give one half-holiday a week to every person employed.

The Minister of Labour, supported by the Secretary for Labour, Chief Inspector of Factories, and a staff of local inspectors, male and female, throughout the Province, took a sympathetic care that the laws were strictly enforced and the wage-earner protected. Their inspection was continuous and minute, and extended to every industry and to every district of the Province. As one of the official reports of the Secretary for Labour states, the inspection was not confined to cities, though no doubt it was most searching there. He says: 'Men scattered widely at the various occupations of colonial country life—shearing, harvesting, bush-felling, road-making—or sailing coastal vessels, etc., require legal protection against the dangers and disabilities to which their callings expose them. This general dispersion of industry necessitates not only a wide system of supervision, but legislative measures of a peculiar character, at once sufficiently elastic to comprehend many varieties of function, and yet rigid to crush any apparent abuse.'

In their yearly reports to Parliament, the officials discussed all the wrongs and incidents of industrial life—strikes, the unemployed, sweating, co-operative contracts, State farms, charitable aid, the truck system, shops and factories, accidents to the workers, and convictions of the masters for infringements of the law.

It is evident that a large expenditure would be required to maintain this system of Government. In Excelsior the yearly estimates of expenditure showed an outlay that would have astonished the old nations of Europe. The revenue was supplied by a high scale of taxation upon income and property, by heavy Customs duties upon imports, and also by loan money that was freely supplied from the London market. In earlier times large sums were got by the sale of Crown lands, and some income was still obtained from the rents of the leaseholders. There was a graduated Land Tax that exempted all improvements from taxation, and which applied only to properties that were over £500 in value; and an Income Tax that left all incomes under £300 a year untouched. As these taxes only fell upon a few, they did not produce much, and the bulk of the money required had to be got from the other sources mentioned.

A considerable portion of the public expenditure was owing, directly or indirectly, to the duty which the State latterly undertook of finding work for the unemployed. Notwithstanding the favourable conditions of the Province for industry, it was not long before the unemployed difficulty presented itself. At first the Government declined to admit that it was the duty of the State to find employment for the people, unless at some exceptional crisis, and then at works upon which a wage, somewhat lower than the full market rate, would be paid. It was then argued that if they were to provide for the manual workers, they should equally provide for the many unemployed clerks and governesses in the Province. But later on in its history, at a season of industrial depression, and when, to whatever cause owing, there was a good deal of distress, this attitude of the Government was departed from, and its duty to provide work was quietly conceded. The accepted formula for expressing the claims of the workers was, that the State should find every willing

man work, or at least put him in the way of finding it for himself. The work thus given was paid for at the full market rate of wages, which was above the value of what a man's labour would produce if employed in tilling the soil, though not above what the combined action of the protection of industry and the enactment of the minimum wage secured to the workers in the limited home market of the town industries. Public works were undertaken partly with a view to their usefulness, but also in consideration of the work that they would give to the unemployed. And in this way active interests and particular districts were able to secure the carrying out of works that would not have been undertaken upon their intrinsic merits.

The Minister of Labour superintended the administration of this part of State service. An office was opened for registering applicants. Books were kept which recorded the names of thousands of manual workers (for these only were entertained), and they were provided for in the order of priority of registration as far as a vigilant Government could provide for them.

There could be no doubt that the social state of Excelsior was a happy one, nay, a blessed one among nations. Its natural conditions made the production of wealth easy. Large sums of money raised by the Government went in the wages of labour, which in Europe would go to war or the preparations for war. Stringent legislation and the constant vigilance of a people's Government promoted the distribution of wealth among the people at large. Still, there were poor in the land. The social reformers were eager to take measures to prevent the growing up among them of evils similar to those which afflicted older lands, and some of which they discerned to be creeping in among them despite all their efforts and amid all the conditions of prosperity that surrounded them. The call for progressive legislation to cope with them was constant. Some citizens said, or rather whispered to one another, that a main cause of the want of employment was that the settlers could not cultivate the land at the wages fixed by the Government standard and under the uncertain conditions of labour. They could only pay the wage that the land produced in the world's market. Thus

they got out of the way of employing, and the workers of looking to them for employment, or adapting themselves to work on the land. But the view of the authorities was different.

The pages of the provincial Hansard contained frequent references to the struggling position of many of the workers, and the difficulty they found in rising in life or bettering their lot. Thus it seemed that one effect of the very stringency of the labour legislation, and the benevolent activity of the Government, was to increase the need for the extension of the system, and to discredit the old-fashioned individualistic methods for coping with the evils of life. The advanced party held that all things led up to a point when a further departure in progressive legislation was demanded, if they were ever to solve effectually the problem of poverty in their province.

When a new Government takes office in a self-governing country, it is expected to announce a fresh and vigorous policy of some kind—something stirring and something attractive. In Excelsior this had always to include some proposals for the industrial relief of the worker. There were many social ills still to be dealt with. But what specially challenged attention was the increase of poverty among the aged. For as the province grew in years, the proportion of old people in the community increased, and the many—and even there there were many—who had failed in the battle of life were being faced with the twin evils of painful want and sad old age. The operation of the minimum wage, too, had been to displace workers who were past their prime. As they were prevented from earning a living by the law, which benefited the younger men at their expense, it was not unreasonable that they should look for another law to provide for them. To do this was one of the advanced proposals of the day, but there were many other plans mooted for the relief of the people. Some of those announced by the very progressive party were considered to be wild and even impossible; but so many ideas which had been regarded in the same light in the past were now accepted as obviously right and reasonable, that it was hard to say where the line was to be drawn in the future. The presumption was in favour of anything new and striking.

Leaving now Sir Donald and his colleagues to select which of the progressive reforms they will take up for the session's work, we find that our politician was not idle during the Parliamentary recess. In Excelsior the most exacting work of the Member of Parliament was outside Parliament, attending to the business of his constituents. This naturally increases the more paternal the government becomes, and the more the State has to do for districts and private interests. The public are impatient of delay in having their wants attended to. The result has been, in all countries that have popular government, the rapid development of the agency functions of the political representative, and that a new double-sided profession has been developed, with a business side and a political side, but of which the business side is the more laborious of the two. For the wants of a district seem more important to its residents than do the wants of the country. A special rush of deputations always sets in upon a new Government, and the skilful spokesman who at such a time introduces a deputation does not fail to convey to the young Minister what a good opportunity he has of showing how broad and generous are the views of the new Cabinet.

Among the letters that our politician found upon his table one morning about this time was one from Birnie Farrar, the Town Clerk of Glooscap, asking him to attend 'a grand united Deputation from Brassville, Leadville, and Tinville,' on the following Tuesday, to the Minister of Lands, which was to be introduced by Mr. Theodore Bunker, the Member for Leadville. It was to urge upon the Minister to grapple with the Rabbit question, which the circular stated 'had now reached an acute stage.' They were to meet at eleven o'clock at the Tramway Arms Hotel, in order to settle the line of action before the Minister.

A few days afterwards Frankfort called at the Water Bureau to see the Minister, Mr. Slater Scully, who had written to him asking his opinion upon a constitutional question that had arisen with regard to Riparian rights in the Water Conservation Bill. Slater Scully, though himself a lawyer, had no taste for intricate phases of any subject, and was rather perplexed over the complex questions of public

and private rights that his Bill had raised. Our politician chose a Friday afternoon, as he knew that the Minister would then be more at leisure than he was during the earlier days of the week. He found the faithful Crane in the waiting-room, as placid and as obsequious as ever.

'It's proud I am to see your Honer, and hope your Honer's well. It's just this very minute that Mr. Lavender has left—most special, particular business took him. I wonder your Honer did not meet him straight upon top of the steps there, going down into the street.'

Thus Crane spoke, moving round and round before Frankfort, and at the same time slightly receding back in his movement, as if mutely to express his willingness that he should come in.

'That's all right, Crane. I don't want Mr. Lavender: I want to see the Minister. Is he in?'

'His Excellency? He is in beyond there. Only he is so dreadful busy. But His Excellency would see your Honer at any time, I'm thinking—he would, to be sure.'

And Crane, with bent head and a complaisant motion forward, led the way to the Minister's room.

To the gentle tap of the head porter at the door, a loud and jovial 'Come in' responded, and as our politician entered the Minister waved him a welcome from the depths of a capacious arm-chair, in which he was reclining, smoking a cigar.

'Glad to see you, Professor. The very man I like to come to me. When soul meets soul, then comes—the solace of human life. Office is killing me. Official life is shortening my natural life. It is a relief to talk with a man who wants nothing.'

'Yes, to be sure, I don't want anything just now—not till next week; and then it is not in your line either. The rabbits go with the Lands, I think?'

'Rabbits! Did you say rabbits, my learned friend? Why, there's that miscreant, my colleague, Sammy Winkley, by office Minister of the Territorial Lands, has gone and shunted off on me a deputation upon the very subject of those multitudinous little creatures—a grand monster, triple-extension combination of a deputation. "Prevented by severe

indisposition," the rogue says. I say—severe indisposition to stay in town for it. But I will be even with you, Master Winkley. I'll give you away, wicked Winkley. Whatever they ask, I will grant and promise in your name.'

'Why, that must be the deputation that I have been written to about, from Glooscap.'

'To be sure it is. Theodore Bunker, M.P., came about it. Triple extension, as I say—Leadville, Brassville, Tinville. Whatever you want shall be done, to please you, and pay out Winkley. If it is only difficult, it is done. If it is impossible, it shall be done.'

'Thank you deeply in anticipation, Mr. Minister,' said Frankfort, with a laugh. 'You are just in the mood for Theodore Bunker.'

As Slater Scully sank back gently in his deep chair, and looked up at the ceiling with a resigned but restful air, Frankfort added :

'About those Riparian rights ; perhaps you are too busy to take up the question now ?'

'Busy, dear friend ? Yes. No. Not now. Exhausted nature will no more ; this week, I mean. Slight intellectual recreation ; mutual converse, friend with friend, mind to mind ; or, as I say, soul to soul ; that is what my soul now demands. Have a cigar ; these are the real superfine ; beat opium-smoking. Let us talk—let us talk.'

As Frankfort passed round to another capacious arm-chair on the other side of the table, his eye was caught by a large invitation card, which lay on the top of a bundle of letters. It was marked by a deep border of gold. Two plethoric golden letters, R. and F., were interlaced at the top. It proclaimed that Alderman and Mrs. Jortin would be at home at 'The Anvil' on a certain afternoon.

'I have got one of these too,' said Frankfort. 'What does the gold mean, and the letters ? And how does *he* come into the "At Home" ? Something new, is it not ?'

'Ah, there's where I have the pull on you. You have no lady of the house to explain these *arcana*. The gold ? Don't you see it's the golden wedding ? Jortin was married, a boy of nineteen, fifty years ago ; the only precipitate, yet one of the wisest things he has done in his wise life. That

is why his name is on the card, and the letters R. and F., Robert and Fanny, interwoven together, like the owners of the names. Most poetical, dear friend.'

'I suppose we should all go then?'

'Well, you observe it stated that *he* is at home as well as she. That is, I am credibly informed, a polite hint to men to come. He calls his home "The Anvil." No silly pride about Jortin. The money made at the ironworks founded his home, and he appropriately names it "The Anvil."'

'I shall go then, by all means. The Jortins have been civil to me; and then he is one of the Board of Overseers of the University. But these daylight "at homes"—well, anyway, you go through a great deal to get very little.'

'They are unquestionably,' Slater Scully responded sententiously, 'an integral, and, I presume, an essential portion of Nature's mysterious, penitential, and disciplinary dispensation for the race of man. I talk not now of woman. But I am going. You will find Slater Scully there, following Mrs. Slater Scully about in a docile manner. And, indeed, I hear that old Jortin means to come down handsome and do things in a grand style!'

'Yes; and I suppose he is an old friend of yours. But what sort of fellow is Jortin? One hears all kind of things about him. I know him only as Overseer at the University. I have not seen much of him.'

'Friend of mine? He is more. He is a client—one of my best. He made my fortune at the law without meaning it. A youth tried to rob him; but I satisfied a jury of his countrymen and mine that he was the true criminal of the episode.'

'Really? Gracious Heavens! why, how did all that come about?'

'Well, if you have a noble thirst for knowledge, list, Hamlet, O list. The afternoon is long; I have cast aside the cares of State till next week, including rivers to be dammed and rabbits to be exterminated. But that cigar you have got is not one for my story—it won't last it out. It is from what I call the Opposition box. Take one from the *de Cabana*, the Ministerial lot—fine long-winded fellows.

And Slater Scully touched the electric button at the table, and when Crane's head appeared at the door, he called out in a commanding tone that he, the Minister of the Bureau, was on no account to be disturbed while he transacted important business with Professor Frankfort; unless, indeed, Sir Donald, the Premier himself, should require to see him. He then reclined back in his chair to enjoy what he dearly loved, a restful repose of the body, together with a gentle and interesting excitation of the mind, produced by indulgence in his favourite pastime of telling o'er one of his eventful stories.

'It was even thus, my friend,' he continued. 'Old Jortin had a daughter, generally spoken of by the critical social public as Jortin's pretty daughter, to distinguish her from the two others called the plain Miss Jortins. Of course, married early against his will,—well-looking fellow, receding forehead, faultless shirt-front, black heart. French—by name Gustave Hilaire d'Ade. Troubles followed in due course. Stern Jortin first disowns her; then forgives her. Faultless Shirt Front deserts her—no more money to be got—disappears, afterwards lost at sea; but left as parting gift one son, precious to broken-hearted mother. Only son grows up in dutiful recognition of precedent set by faultless Shirt Front: unstable young chap; no holding him; gambling from his marbles upwards. At last, as a youth, gets into gambling speculations; ends by forging grandpapa Jortin's name to transfer of mining scrip. Usual thing, deposit for security to raise a couple of hundred for a week; easy resale of shares he was buying to make his fortune, at large profit, all be put straight again,—grand speculation in silver; at worst, grandfather would never prosecute. But things go awry with men and mice. Lo, attorney for lender, entering transfer, by chance blots it. Better make fresh copy; get Jortin sign again. Presented accordingly. "What may this be?" "Your transfer of those shares." Forgery discovered. Jortin furious. Attorney hurries away; takes out warrant to arrest youth. Superintendent of Police goes privately to Jortin. "Warrant issued, my dear sir. Your own grandson, you see, the forger—if it really be a forgery; quite a boy. Perhaps he thought he had your authority—some misappre-

hension. If you concede authority, case over—end of unpleasant business.”

‘Jortin’s blood up, but only inside ; cold and calm outside.

“I own to a falsehood, Mr. Superintendent? No, sir. No authority. Don’t mind my feelings, I beg.”

‘Officer retires. Declares Jortin hard as his own iron ; money more than blood, bad blood to be sure—faultless Shirt Front.’

‘Well, it does seem an inhuman thing. His own flesh——’

‘Dear friend, you talk like a D.D. Still, there was this in it,’ continued Slater Scully, looking with a half-reflective and half-inquiring air at the curls of smoke from his cigar as they floated gracefully upwards. ‘There is this in it, dear Frankfort, that the thing was known, the warrant was issued, the lender was proceeding ; the only way out was for Jortin to do two things, neither of which he took a fancy to. One was to pay the money ; the other was to own his authority to the transaction. To be fair, Jortin was a perfectly truthful man, and as straight as the shortest line between here and the door. A Philadelphia lawyer could not disentangle all the motives that actuated him ; but he satisfied himself, at least, that it was his duty not to cover up crime, and so on and so forth. However, the young mother came to me, broken-hearted, to defend her boy. Pretty widow—pretty widow, you damaged the heart of Slater Scully at that interview. Twenty years of law and politics and iniquity generally have not scorched away the feeling from my breast of the sympathy that swelled up within me as I saw her distracted between the devotion of the mother and love of the daughter. For she loved old Jortin all the while. “Madam,” I said, “don’t distress yourself. This is not a matter for me at all. Go to your father ; he won’t refuse you ; get him to stop the thing and pay the money himself.”

“I have gone,” she sobbed, “and father has been kind to me. But he said he couldn’t—was not possible, or legal, or something of that sort.”

‘And then she described the interview to me between

father and daughter, and the image of it yet remains in the brain of Slater Scully. The father, stern by nature, still with a kind feeling for his belongings, but hardened as to all business affairs by the struggles and conflicts of a lifetime; seated at his business desk, outwardly cool, and impervious to any considerations beyond the principles of the counting-house, and roused to the deep solid anger of which he was capable by the outrage that had been done to him morally, and even more financially; yet he was touched by the moving spectacle of the young mother—for she had married when quite a child—pleading in such sad case to her father, for her son. He knew that he felt for her; but what did she feel for the boy?

“Father—grandfather,” she said, with broken voice, “you must save my boy—the little boy I used to bring to see you; so good he was, and looked so pretty. I can’t think of his being in prison with bad men and dreadful things all about him.”

‘He would be a strange father, my friend, who would not be moved; and Jortin was deeply moved. He was on the point of giving way and telling the pretty daughter to dry her tears, as he would do everything as she wished, when some bad spirit that must have been hovering around in the air suggested various considerations to check him. There was the loss of the money. He could not claim the scrip if he admitted the transfer. Then the audacious example of the young scamp in forging his, Robert Jortin’s, signature; and its effect upon the clerks in the office, one of whom he had recently prosecuted and had convicted for embezzlement. Further, would it be right in him to admit an authority, or, at least, a tacit sanction to the signing of his name, which, in fact, did not exist? Still, he was moved. He did feel for his daughter. True, she had defied him in marrying the man with the faultless shirt-front; but had she not suffered, and had he not forgiven her and received her for several years past? He paused for a moment before he replied; and then, I suppose, the evil spirit came on with a rush, for he slowly said:

“It is dreadful, my dear Fanny—dreadful. But can I help it now? I cannot, as they say in law, compound a

felony. It is not the money. It is—I am a Justice. I cannot be a party to a crime.”

“Was that his answer to you?” I asked. She only replied with a sob.

“Very well, madam,” I continued, “you can dry your tears. I will defend your boy. We shall win—we shall win. He will be a free boy again with you directly!”

“But what can you say? He does not deny it,” she said, looking up with a sudden surprise through her tears.

“Leave that to me, madam—leave that to me. It is enough for you that we shall win.”

“Well, do get him off some way!” she exclaimed with sobs. “But don’t say bad things of father, either. It is the law he thinks of, you know. He is a Justice.”

‘You had not much of a case on the merits,’ remarked Frankfort.

‘Merits! Hadn’t I, though. Poor boy; rich grandfather; flesh and blood more than gold; human nature before bank notes, and so forth. And I was in luck, my friend—I was in luck. The judge was old Flatley, who would confuse any twelve men if he tried to explain that the whole was equal to its parts, or that two and two didn’t make five; and as for the jury, several of them were so well stricken in years that they might have been the grandfather themselves, and they could only hear now and then what was going on. So I let them prove everything: asked only a few questions to show the wealth of the Alderman, and that the prisoner was his grandchild. When the Crown case closed, the Judge asked me if I called witnesses. I did look surprised, you may believe me.

“Witnesses, your Honour? To answer what?” I exclaimed. “Certainly not!”

“Oh, I merely wanted to know,” said old Flatley, “so as to put it on my notes. Perhaps you will address the jury, then, Mr. Slater Scully?”

“Well, perhaps I may as well, your Honour,” I replied. Then, turning to the jury, I began in a subdued, indifferent tone by saying that the case was so plain that I was quite in doubt whether I should address them at all or not. Obviously that innocent-looking boy before them assumed

that he had his grandfather's authority for the transaction. What more natural when one considered Nature's crimson thread between parent and grandchild? When there appeared to be some unexpected trouble about the authority, the poor boy and widowed mother offered to repay all. Was there a criminal in the transaction? Far be it from me to deny it. But where was he? That was the question the jury should ask themselves with trumpet tongues. "Not there is the criminal," said I, pointing to the dock; "but there!" I exclaimed with outstretched arm and withering glance directed towards where old Jortin was sitting, the very image of calm respectability. "None of them," I continued, "were old enough to have reached grand-paternal dignity; but yet, as even young men, they could have some idea of what the feelings of a natural grandfather would be. What, then, were they to say to one who disowned his own offspring, and whose heart could only beat hard, metallic strokes, like the clinking of his own coin? Good Heavens, was it come to this! A new sort of Shylock in their fair young province, who claimed not only his pound of flesh, but his pound of flesh sliced from his own offspring. The five-and-thirty thousand a year that Alderman Jortin enjoyed"—I thought it better to mention a good sum while I was about it, and several of the jury took a note of the amount—"was certainly an income that a plain man might manage to live upon. But as for me, I would rather live and die plain, penniless Slater Scully than possess money that would freeze up the genial current of my soul." I wound up, my friend, with a general denunciation of ill-gotten gains, and with an expression of my confident assurance that their verdict would be based upon the immutable principles of truth and justice.'

'I suppose you were all right till the Judge came to sum up?' remarked Frankfort.

'Yes, friend, and I was all right then too; for, d'ye see, old Flatley also thought the case too clear to call for much comment—no defence, in fact—so he began just as I began, "Plain case, gentlemen, needn't trouble you much about it"; read some of his notes, commenced explaining the law about authority, and no authority, and want of previous authority

supplied by subsequent ratification, and dating back, and the Lord knows what. All the while I kept my eye upon several of the grand-paternal members of the jury, and nodded assentingly to all the wise sayings of Flatley, so that they took it all as in my favour, and directly he stopped they acquitted the young scamp in a prompt, decisive sort of way, as if they quite agreed with me that it was clear that the real criminal was Jortin himself, not Gustave Robert d'Ade, the hapless youth at the bar."

'To be sure, why, you cannot wonder at it. Grandfather against grandson,—the pound of flesh, as you say, with a vengeance.'

'True for you, Professor. And then there is this more in it. We don't feel so acutely about the rights and wrongs of property in these latter days as men did when laws were made and opinions formed by the propertied class. Then the respectable indignation against the criminal would have been so great that it would have dulled the feeling about the harshness of the grandparent. It is just the other way round now.'

'Still, the difference between honesty and dishonesty is permanent. We have not got beyond that, have we?'

'No, we have not,' deliberately replied Slater Scully, again gazing musingly as he lay back in his chair, this time apparently at the end of his Habana. 'What you remark is just, Professor. Honesty and dishonesty are still among men as before. But, after all, may not the principle of honesty have varying manifestations in varying ages? In one age, *caro mio*, it may centre all about *meum* and *tuum*; in another it may reveal itself in fair-play between man and man—man and boy, if you like.'

'Ah well, if you had ordered a case for a good speech, you could not have had a better one. Just the thing to give a man a fair start.'

'Yes. When the jury gave their verdict and the court was adjourned, all the people crowded around, talking and denouncing Jortin to one another, and congratulating the jurors upon their just verdict. The Alderman, as he walked away quite cool and collected with his attorney, Jimmy Tugwell, of the big firm of Tugwell and Co.—you know them

—quietly said, “Mr. Tugwell, be good enough to give Mr. Slater Scully a general retainer for me at once. He is just the sort of man we want for our bad cases.” Jimmy told me his instructions straight when he came to give me the retainer. We had a laugh over it. He can see a joke, can Jimmy.’

‘And did you meet him often afterwards? Had you opportunity to see what sort of fellow he really is, old Jortin?—to come back to the question with which we started.’

‘Yes, I have met him about several of his bad cases. These he honoured me with chiefly. He really is a very fair man. He provided for the pretty daughter when she was deserted, and after a while became quite reconciled to her and took her to his home. The whole strange, eventful story is now, to be sure, forgotten. But I always feel grateful to him. I dare not blame his hard nature, my friend. Indeed, to say the truth, I bless it. A man may not be feeling himself, yet may be the cause of feeling in others. He may not be eloquent, my friend, yet may be the cause of eloquence in others—in Slater Scully, to wit.’

While he and his companion are finishing their cigars and their afternoon’s conversation, the reader might like to learn something more about this story of Alderman Jortin, his pretty daughter, and his grandson, which was for some years one of the most prominent social topics and, as it was generally regarded, social scandals of Excelsior. Slater Scully’s rapid summary had given not incorrectly the general outlines of this strange story.

Jortin had unquestionably acted a cruel part. But his action was not so inhuman as it seemed at the time to those who looked at it in the light of public opinion, which accepts its own impression of men’s conduct as seen from the outside, and does not trouble itself about those mitigating considerations which an inside knowledge of all the facts often presents. At the outset of the unfortunate affair the officer of police had taken him by surprise, seated as he was in his business chair, cased round for the day in the inflexible counting-house attitude, which he assumed every morning as he left the hall door of *The Anvil*. The sense of wrong

and injury from the pretty daughter's hapless match also was still alive within him, though, as far as she was concerned, he had forgiven her ; and then suddenly all this smouldering bitterness against the bad husband and the unhappy marriage was revived by the audacious crime of the boy who was the offspring of it. Despite his deep self-control, for the moment this feeling carried him away, so that he rejected all the friendly and humane suggestions of the official. 'Proceed, sir. Don't mind my feelings,' he said. This outburst of the old sense of deep resentment at the marriage was the determining factor in his action.

But this once entertained, there were other considerations to support it, and to disguise from himself the reality of what he was doing. When the Superintendent came to him the fact of the forgery had been made known to the public. As a man of business, he was well aware that no one would believe the story that he had given the lad authority to sign the transfer with his name. He had before his eyes the case of the young clerk, also a mere boy, whom he had, as Slater Scully mentioned, only lately prosecuted for embezzlement, and who was now expiating his crime among the other convicts in the State prison at Miranda. That boy, he said to himself, had a fond mother too, no doubt, and a father, and perhaps an honest, worthy father, not like—— Then Jortin was a very clear-headed, matter-of-fact man. He had an instinctive hatred of the glossing over of facts, and presenting them in an untrue light by any sentimental make-believe. And he certainly considered that it was not the right thing for a Justice of the Peace, and a man upon whose word so many depended, to back up a sham pretence, and also to condone a felony. This consideration had much weight with him ; or, at least, one of the personalities bound up in him used it with great effect on the other personality and silenced the milder feelings which it might entertain, making it seem to be a mere plain duty to punish crime, instead of shielding it. To state the different proportions in which these varying impulses contributed to the tragic result would be a task which no man could successfully undertake, certainly not Alderman Jortin himself.

However, the outcry against him throughout the Province was for a while terrific, and would have quite upset a man who was framed upon milder lines than he was. What! a grandfather allow the prosecution of his own grandson, break the heart of his own daughter, about a wretched affair of a couple of hundred pounds! A mere boy, a little free with his pen. 'The monster!' said all the women; 'his wife should poison him. He don't deserve to live as either husband, father, or grandfather. Why don't these talking Parliament men do some good and make a law to deal with such wretches?' 'Leave him alone,' said the men; 'he can't live for ever. In due time he and all his silver, and his iron too, will be melted down together.' Jortin faced the world with a steady, undaunted aspect. He did not, in fact, care much what it thought or said either. But most wrong things done in this world do bring some retribution, and the real trial of the unhappy man was in his own home.

In ordinary times he was undisputed master there. He was a fond husband and, despite his outburst of anger against the foolish marriage of the pretty daughter, a kind parent; but no one presumed to cross him in his home. Mrs. Jortin as a general rule took a pride in depending upon and being led by the strong man, her husband. But there was one other love which was as powerful in her nature as the love of the wife, namely, the mother's love. She had from the first pleaded the cause of the foolish, pretty daughter, and sought to make the best of the forbidden marriage, urging that what was done could not be undone; that you could not have an old head on young shoulders; that boys would be boys and girls would be girls, do what you could; that some of the best matches made had been runaway ones; that her father's aunt had done the very same thing seventy years ago, and had lived happily ever after; and sundry other unanswerable but unsatisfactory arguments. When the worst came, and the faultless Shirt Front disappeared, she wanted to bring the daughter and the little son back home at once. This Jortin would not then agree to; but he readily provided a comfortable home for her, and though he for a while would not meet her himself, he was glad enough to know that the mother looked after her, and

had her and the boy quietly at The Anvil to mid-day dinner when he was in town at the works.

At last the good mother arranged one visit of the daughter and boy for the Saturday afternoon ; and when Jortin walked calmly into his house, relaxing his rigid business tone into the kindlier mode that was suitable for his home at the close of the week's work and the prospect of the coming day of rest, there he saw, in his little drawing-room (it was before he had enlarged The Anvil), the pretty young widow, Fanny d'Ade, dressed in half widow mourning, most becoming of costumes. Standing by her was a small boy, some five years old, bright and handsome, full of the pleasure of his visit, with no thought of ban or shadow anywhere in his little world, and, oh ! the very image of the fascinating, faultless Shirt Front. The young mother looked prettier than ever in the slight confusion into which she was thrown by the father's entrance, and the colour flushing tremulously over her cheeks, gave that indescribable charm which the glow of agitated feelings will impart to much less comely features than those of Fanny d'Ade.

He would be a hard man indeed who could resist such a situation ; and though one Jortin, the public one, was hard, the other Jortin, the domestic one, had within him a fair substratum of kindly feeling. He did not hesitate one moment. He embraced his child fondly and greeted the grandchild kindly, though still he could not wholly rid himself of a feeling that was unsympathetic to anything that was identified with the faultless Shirt Front. But the boy looked up so cheerfully and so confidingly to his grandfather, and, tossing back his curls cheerily, as he looked up and held out his hand, said so prettily, having been carefully taught by his mother, 'How do you do, grandpa? I hope that you and grandma are very well,' that he quite relented, declared that the boy did his mother credit, gave him a present of a bright half-crown, and tried his best to forget all about the other parent.

It was this little boy that had committed the forgery. Mother and child were soon established in the old home. The son grew up to be more handsome each year he lived, and was a very affectionate son to his devoted mother. But

he early showed unmistakable proclivities that reminded unfavourably all who observed him, except the fond mother, of the faultless Shirt Front. He had a special turn for games of chance, for hazarding his all of pocket-money upon some lottery from which he was certain he would get a big cash prize. When his mother would give him a few shillings to buy something nice at the church bazaar, he forthwith expended them in getting sixpenny tickets in the most promising raffles. When, at the end of the day, he found that somehow all his numbers were blanks, he was for the moment disappointed ; but his general faith in raffles was not in the least shaken. At the next bazaar he was as ready as ever to venture all again. He quite enjoyed the excitement, being able to hug the secret hope all day that when the drawing came in the evening he would find himself the happy owner of the golden sovereign that the promoters of the gamble assured the numerous holders of the sixpenny tickets would be handed over to whoever held the right number. When he was old enough to study the newspapers—a stage in life that the youth of Excelsior reached quite early—he read with deep interest, and not without some amazement, the wonderful opportunities that mining ventures, racing, and other events that depended upon chance offered of making a fortune out of nothing. Just think of it. For one pound—and a pound was not so much—you might win five thousand pounds, and be able to set up as an independent man at once, ride a showy horse and enjoy life, or go to Europe and be happy there.

Still, these were only boyish freaks after all—the diversions or dissipations of a sanguine temperament. He was a distinctly gentlemanly lad in his manner, his appearance, and also in his disposition. The grandfather, though one of the Board of Overseers at the University, did not value college training, and took him into the office at the Anvil Works when he was only fifteen. But after giving him a fair trial for nearly a year, the chief clerk (confidential man), when questioned by Jortin about the lad's progress, reported truthfully that he had better take to something else, as he was not adapted to steady office work. He was very slow in learning to write the proper business hand ; he was

at times late in coming to the office ; and he every now and then got mysterious telegrams that seemed to require his immediate attention and an early visit to the Mining Exchange.

‘I know, sir,’ the confidential man added, ‘that you expect me to tell you the facts straight, sir ; and the fact is, sir, that he don’t seem to have his heart in the work.’

‘Certainly, Mr. Towers—certainly. I do expect you to tell me the facts, whatever they may be. I am much obliged to you, Mr. Towers. I will attend to it,’ replied Jortin in his composed office manner. When Towers withdrew he gave some minutes’ consideration to the question, what he should do with his grandson. He wished to do what was best for him, though some bitterness still mingled with his reflections as he recognised in the lad’s character traits plainly inherited from the faultless Shirt Front. Evidently Gustave Robert d’Ade did not belong to the Jortin side of the house. In deciding what to do with the boy, he thought only of the business question—what he would be best at, and never considered the danger that was run by a speculative youth, such as he was, being brought into close contact with mining ventures. He asked his friend Dorland to give his grandson a place as a junior on his inspecting staff for mines ; and he was appointed as clerk to M’Ivor, Dorland’s managing man, and to attend him when he went out on his visits to the mines.

He proved to be a most agreeable companion, and had an excellent manner in dealing with people. To M’Ivor he was quite deferential ; yet in conversation and address he appeared to be the better man, involuntarily and as if he could not help it. In telling a good story he was an easy first. The homely and rather diffident M’Ivor could only listen respectfully. He had the knack of saying the right thing at the right moment. He looked at all the mining managers and speculators that they met in business in an open, engaging manner, as much as to say, ‘All right, let us be good friends, even though we are trying to do one another.’ But unfortunately he was now right in the middle of a little world of gambling, venture, chance ; where men lived on, and a few prospered by, not work, but speculation, lucky hits, fortunes made out of

nothing, or out of the ruin of other people. He was really not a bad youth ; but he had not ballast enough for the sail that he carried—not enough, at least, in the dangerous latitude in which he now found himself. It was inevitable that, with that nature of his, he should speculate, a little at least. It was a small thing that he intended when he began. He got two hundred shares in the newly-projected Syphon Silver Mining Company at sevenpence-halfpenny each. In a few months they struck the ore, and he sold the shares for £150. He thought that his fortune was made. But it was only his fate that was being accomplished. Naturally, he went on from one venture to another, sanguine, cheerful, excitable, till at last he got, by the well-worn downward steps, into that pit from which his only possible means of rescue was to get an immediate advance of a couple of hundred pounds from somebody. But from whom? Where is the two hundred pounds to come from? This is a question that has been asked by thousands, before and since, who have been in a similar perplexity, but which has been satisfactorily solved by few. As spending money when you are in no want of it is one of the easiest things possible, so getting money when you must have it is one of the most difficult things in the world. So who was to give this large sum to young d'Ade? In this fatal perplexity, confident as ever of the success of the very latest speculation that he had taken, when all could be repaid, if only he could tide over the immediate difficulty, he had sought escape by the means that Slater Scully's story describes, and with the result that the reader knows.

But when this unhappy event had been completed, as far as the public were concerned, by the acquittal of the forger, and the storm of public indignation had broken, not upon him, but upon Jortin, the chief trial of the unhappy Alderman was, as we have said, in his own home. It was in vain that he reminded his wife, usually the meek Fanny, that he was not only a man of business, whose word was his bond, and who dare not compromise himself by acting a sham, but also a Justice of the Peace for the Province of Excelsior, and thus specially charged with maintaining the law ; or that he explained to her that the thing had, in fact, gone

beyond his control when the officer of police came to him. With that instinct that women have for seeing intuitively straight into the right of a matter, she decisively rejected all excuses and explanations, with the result that he was very unhappy about the whole affair, mainly, as he persuaded himself, upon his wife's account. For, as to himself, he still maintained that he had acted rightly, and that no man or justice should cover up a crime. He tried to placate Mrs. Jortin by all those little devices that prudent husbands, taught by experience, learn early in married life. Among other peace-offerings which he thought of, he now went regularly with her on Sunday to meeting; with the result, however, that several of the congregation only denounced him afresh to one another, walking home from prayers together, as an audacious hypocrite. More than one of the very good said as much to the pastor, the Rev. Silas Flinders. But he rather avoided committing himself upon the subject. He only replied to one of his leading female worshippers, who expressed her feeling that destruction awaited Jortin in the next world, if not in this—

‘Well, Mrs. Mogg, yes, ’tis sad indeed. It is, you know, written of old “that the way of transgressors is hard”’—leaving it quite an open question which of the parties in the sad affair he was pointing at.

After a while, and as the result of many marital discussions, the Alderman arrived at a basis of agreement with his wife. She had demanded as the terms of peace that they should have the pretty daughter home again with them. When the storm burst, she had fled to the son's lodgings, so as to stand by him through it. Further, Mrs. Jortin demanded that, as for the boy, he should be forgiven too, and some small place given to him again in the Anvil office, as the only way to conciliate wounded public opinion. As a fact, Jortin was quite willing to agree to the first condition. He was indeed anxious to have his own child again under the shelter of his roof. But as for the second condition of peace, he was resolved not to concede that; and he determined, in his fixed business way, rather to break off the negotiations and to resume the *status quo ante bellum*.

So he artfully made answer to his wife that, to please

her, he was willing to have the daughter in the home in her old place, as the eldest daughter of the house, and that he would provide work for the son with one of his business connections in the neighbouring province of Amanta. But he positively refused to employ him himself, or to meet him or recognise him in any way. Mrs. Jortin, after private conference with the daughter, thought it better to accept these terms, for the present at least. The youth was sent off to Amanta, and the mother joined the home at The Anvil. Her first impulse was to go away with the boy; but she saw how much her mother would feel the separation, and also she thought that the goal of reconciliation ultimately between the boy and his grandfather, which she had ever in view, would be more likely to be reached if she kept her place in the home. The father was quite pleased to have her with him again, and installed her in her old place as the eldest daughter, just as if all that had happened was only a dream—though a hideous one. And Fanny d'Ade, who had all the warm feeling of an impulsive nature, despite what had happened, returned him the tender affection of a daughter—an affection which was all the stronger since her heart had been so cruelly wounded as a wife, and so sadly tried as a mother.

But can any other affection make a true mother forget the son whom she has borne? Certainly not when he is a wild one. Though Fanny d'Ade became more cheerful, and accordingly looked brighter and handsomer than when the light of her countenance was darkened in the great sorrow, she still had a constant longing to have Gustave Robert near her again—at least within reach of a visit. 'I want to be near him, to see that he gets into no more mischief, mother,' she would say. Not that the accounts which they had from his employer gave cause for further uneasiness. Quite the contrary. The shock of the trial, and especially his mother's misery and despair, had made him a new being. As if with a supernatural touch, it had crystallised into one firm, clear form all the latent and scattered good in his nature. The business letters from Amanta to Alderman Jortin often contained paragraphs bearing testimony to the diligent and meritorious behaviour of young d'Ade, and he

always reported these to his daughter, as he knew that they made her so happy. Once or twice, on his telling her the good news, she had answered, 'Oh, I am so thankful. But, father, he only speaks of Robert'—she was now in the habit of speaking of the boy by his second or grand-parental name—'he only speaks of Robert as he knows him in the office; I wish he had some one to look after him at other times. He may get into some other mischief, and I don't want him to do anything wrong ever again.'

'Well, well, let us trust not, Fanny dear,' the father would say kindly, and then quietly resume his paper, giving no encouragement to the obvious meaning of his daughter's remark. But before long wife and daughter combined their forces afresh, and opened out new lines of circumvallation around the father to compel his surrender to their demand that he should become reconciled to Robert, and have him back in Miranda, in lodgings in the city; for even they did not ask that he should be admitted as one of the home at The Anvil. To this advance Jortin opposed a firm front. He wished the youth well, but he would not meet him again. The wife and daughter, however, determined that he should. Each belligerent was resolved not to give way—rather to die on the field. So here were the conditions of a struggle like that which scientists have imagined between an irresistible force and an immovable obstruction. It is clear that in this case either one or the other must in the end prevail. Time alone can reveal which.

Meanwhile we must, for the present, leave Alderman Jortin and his affairs and return to the Minister's office at the Water Bureau, where we left Frankfort and Slater Scully. As the jovial Minister finished the story of his relations with the Jortin family, he touched the electric button at the table, and directly Crane's head appeared at the half-opened door. He addressed to his faithful attendant a formula of speech with the interpretation of which a pretty frequent experience had made him familiar.

'Mr. Crane, I am anxious to present my *compliments*' (he laid special emphasis upon the word) 'to Professor Frankfort. Would you kindly help me so to do? He has been talking so long in an improving manner to me that he

is dry, and,' the Minister added, looking round through his large spectacles, as he leaned back in a languid manner—'and, for the matter of that, so am I.'

'To be sure I will, your Excellency, and that quick,' responded Crane, as he hurried to the well-known cupboard at the end of the room, muttering the while to himself, as a sort of commentary on, or a descriptive chorus of, what was going forward. 'To be sure I will, your Excellency. An' I had that confidence in your Excellency that ye would be wanting some support after this working away all the afternoon, not to mention its being at the end of the week, and the long hours so trying, to be sure now.'

The needed refreshment was soon produced, and Slater Scully explained the various brands and their respective values. The Ministerial was the true liquor—sound, nourishing, agreeable. The Opposition was crude stuff, and though some people fancied it, it wanted a lot of keeping before it would suit judicious palates. But the Independent brand was the worst of all. It was, the Minister declared, 'a mere teetotal tippie. I keep it for the Rechabites. It has no sustaining power at a pinch. You cannot rely on it for support.'

Frankfort and the Minister drank success to one another for the coming session, and Frankfort rose to leave, having at least passed a pleasant hour with his genial companion, though certainly no progress had been made with the perplexing question of Riparian rights. He had nearly reached the door, when Slater Scully called after him:

'By the bye, I had forgotten—I want a pound from you. Here, read that!'

He handed him a printed circular, which called on all men to subscribe to a fund which was to purchase an annuity for the Honourable Joseph Hatchett, who had been for thirty-five years a Representative of the people; and who, 'as a Minister of the Crown, by his generous policy of distributing the public lands had enabled thousands of citizens to secure smiling homes upon the soil'; but who now, alas! was old, penniless, and in failing health.

'Certainly,' said Frankfort, as he glanced over the circular—'certainly, I'll give my pound. A man who had the

worth of hundreds of thousands of pounds in his hands to give away to be pitched aside to starve is all wrong. I never knew much of him myself; but I believe he was a very honest man.'

'Honest, my friend! Joe Hatchett was and is an honest old bear, a conscientious Caliban, a growling grampus, spouting, but not voracious like his species. Hence the empty condition of the animal. Professor,' added Slater Scully, leaning back and passing his hand, as if in thought, over his forehead, and then holding it out in an explanatory manner — 'Professor, old Joe was honest. He knew not how to fleece others, nor yet how to clothe himself, and I must respectfully maintain, despite the authority of Holy Writ, that the wind is not always tempered to the shorn animal.' Slater Scully was such an admirer of the Bible, that it was his custom to credit the sacred volume with any quotation that appeared to be suitable and as to the source of which he was uncertain.

'It is a hard case, then,' said Frankfort; 'it would seem to be rather a fit one for one of those pensions that you denounce so eloquently.'

'Hast thou found me out, O mine enemy? No more o' that. Give me the coin.'

'Certainly. Here it is. But it will take a good many pounds, even at his age, to get the annuity. A few pounds from friends and Members won't do it.'

'No. But they will relieve his present want; and,' Slater Scully added, with a graver air than was usual with him, 'he is in want. He must be fed. Pensions to the aged poor are not yet law. If he gets over the present pinch, perhaps we could get a grant from the House for a thousand or so for the old man, on some make-believe or other.'

Just then a strong knock was heard at the door. It could never have been Crane's—that confident rap. Without staying for answer, too, the door was opened, and in walked Sir Donald MacLever himself. He shook hands with our politician in a more hearty manner than was his wont; for, like him or dislike him, he could not but recognise the disinterested support that the Government got from the Member for Brassville. Turning to his Water Minister,

he asked when he would have the question of Riparian rights ready for the consideration of the Cabinet.

‘I am wearing myself out upon it, Sir Donald, day by day—not to mention night by night. But, if I survive, it will be ready next week. Meanwhile, I was just having a word with Mr. Frankfort here about old Hatchett. Could we not ask a generous House to give him a small grant? Just read that affecting circular. Old Hatchett is hard up—hard up a tree, in fact.’

Sir Donald took up the circular and glanced rapidly through it.

‘Yes,’ he observed slowly, ‘I got one of these in the usual morning’s batch.’

‘Well, sir, what say you? Can I tell the venerable Hatchett that the Government will ask Parliament to buy a small annuity for him—say five pounds a week? Is there balm in Gilead to the tune of a thousand? Most of them have known Hatchett from his political youth downwards—from spring’s early promise to now, the winter of his discontent.’

‘Buying an annuity is rather like a pension, is it not?’ asked Sir Donald, smiling grimly upon the open, kindly upturned countenance of Slater Scully. ‘And last session I understood that you and other eloquent gentlemen demonstrated that pensions were a public iniquity. At least, I thought so. Perhaps,’ he added, with a slight drawl, —‘perhaps I misunderstood you.’

‘Oh, come now, Sir Donald. Let us think a bit of old Hatchett, nearing threescore and ten, and——’ Slater Scully sat up in his chair in some indignation at the cold cynicism of his chief, and was going off into an eloquent expostulation, when the latter quietly interposed, looking at the paper again :

‘Besides, with great respect to you, I don’t quite see where the pressing need is for a pension from the Government. Your own circular shows that there is no need for it.’

‘The circular—shows—no need!’ ejaculated Slater Scully, looking up in a more helpless manner than ever.

‘Yes, certainly. It says that his spirited distribution of the public estate among thousands gave them happy homes.

I would respectfully suggest that these thousands give ten shillings a-piece to relieve the wants of their benefactor, and if they do he will be a great deal better off than most of his brother ex-Ministers are.'

Here another tap was heard at the door, and the Ministers who had been hastily summoned came in, headed by the Minister of Works, who was laden with maps and plans. They were followed by Du Tell, who threw around our politician an inquisitive glance as he shook hands with him, as much as to say, 'What brings you here just now?' It seemed clear to Frankfort that an impromptu Cabinet meeting had been summoned suddenly; though why at the end of the week, and why not at the Premier's office, he did not know. However, it did not need Du Tell's searching survey of him to satisfy him that he was not expected to stay, so he took his leave without delay.

In Europe this hasty meeting of the Cabinet would have probably indicated some unexpected foreign complication. In Excelsior it was owing to the need that had suddenly arisen of finding work for the unemployed; and Sir Donald had arranged for holding it quietly in a junior Minister's room, instead of his own, so as to avoid exciting public attention to their deliberations.

In Excelsior it had become the custom to expect the Government to be ready with work for unemployed artisans and labourers by the beginning of the winter, at the end of May; but this year the season threatened to be an early one, and now, even in April, meetings of the unemployed had begun in the city. That day a formidable gathering had been held on one of the vacant places of the town. It was a representative meeting. Mr. Caffery and Mr. Stoker were there as the leaders of the Populist party. The Rev. Simeon Sinclair, the philanthropic minister, Mr. Eneas Birt, the town missionary, Mr. Tom Blunt, the well-known worker in social reform, and Commander Soyer, of the Salvation Army, represented the non-political element which supported the movement. Reporters from the leading newspapers were ready, book in hand, for note-taking. Mons. Froessolecque had been early upon the ground, so as to be able to secure a full account of all that passed for the *Sweet-Brier*.

The reader already knows something of Mr. Stoker and Mr. Caffery. Mr. David Stoker being as much a dissenter from the old order in church matters as in politics, was quite at home with the town missionary and the Salvation Army commander. And Mr. Caffery, the devout Catholic, was all in favour of the most democratic methods for helping the poor. In this he was understood to have the approval of Cardinal M'Gillicuddy ; though the Cardinal by no means committed himself to all the demands of the unemployed, and in his addresses to the Convent and other Catholic schools he often insisted upon the supreme merit of work, and self-denial in the struggle of life.

Some five or six hundred men had gathered round the rickety wooden stand which was to serve as platform for the speakers. A few saddened-looking women, some with babies in their arms, mingled with the crowd, while around it was the usual fringe of street arabs, who sported about as if they had satisfied themselves that there would never be such a thing as an unemployed question as far as they were concerned.

It was certainly a depressing sight, take it how you will, to look upon those five or six hundred independent but impoverished citizens. The spectacle of a man asking for work in order that he may get bread, and not able to get work, nor therefore the bread, is surely saddening anywhere. But what are we to think of it in a young country, sparsely populated, with free lands, and full of wealth that asks only for man's labour to bring it forth? To complete the problem, too, money was very cheap in Excelsior. Some millions of it, the savings of the people, lay in the Government and in private banks at two-and-a-half and three per cent interest. Thus in this province there were idle lands and idle money, and a Government struggling by a lavish expenditure on public works to find employment for idle men. Here certainly is a problem. A full-grown nation would have to solve it or perish.

As you looked upon the crowd, with their upturned faces speaking of grievances and discontent, you could see some who, though young, had not been trained to hard work ; some who were too old to be expected to do anything but

rest in peace ; a few who were mere idlers ; a few who were mere agitators. But the majority were decent men, who were willing to work, but who could not get it upon the terms that they wanted. This was the fact, whatever be the explanation of the fact. And they were not only suffering distress, but they felt that they were wronged in not being provided for. They did not do, what few of us are willing to do, blame themselves for anything. They did not stay to inquire whether any want of energy or foresight upon their part, or of self-denial or thrift—if such want there was—had aught to do with their present distressed condition. They sincerely blamed the Government for not looking after them in time, and seeing that proper provision was made for the winter's work. In the spring and summer they might get along, but what were they to do in winter? They felt want, and they asked what was the use of a Government that did not protect its people? And, to do the men justice, the Government did not disown the duty thus cast upon them. If they did not explicitly admit the right of every one to be provided with work by the State, they practically conceded it, at least as far as the manual worker was concerned. They excused any limit to the extent of State employment only upon the ground of the want of funds. They tacitly accepted the duty to find work for every labourer, if they could find the money to pay him. Their poverty, not their will, stood in the way of employing all who could not find employment for themselves that they liked to take. The restless crowd who pressed around the little rickety platform, from whence they looked for hope and deliverance in their troubles, did not regard themselves as suppliants for aid, but as citizens with a grievance against the Government. Behind it was the feeling that they had no need to be helpless suppliants. They could redress their wrongs at the ballot-box.

Mr. Caffery and Mr. Stoker were both anxious that there should be no violent language used at the meeting, and had determined that, to promote that end, there should be few speeches, and those only from people whom they knew. For, while willing to get political credit for vigorous

action on behalf of the workless, they also did wish to see the distress relieved, and they knew that mere invective against the Government, and extravagant demands, would not assist their object. They had asked Secker Secretary of the State Workers' Association to speak, knowing him to be a safe man; but he always avoided identifying himself with the unemployed movement. He was a practical man, and, exercising his right of private judgment, he held that there 'was a paling out in the fence,' as he mused to himself, in the methods of the Government in undertaking to provide for the unemployed. The complete Socialist scheme he could understand, but not one-half of it by itself. Besides, he did not wish to mix up the State workers, who were the aristocracy of labour, with the unemployed outsiders, though he helped the casual workers in the Service. So, in answer to Mr. Caffery's appeal for his aid, he made a sympathetic reply. But what could he do? His President, Major Trounce, was out of town for a week, and he could not think of appearing without his sanction. So it was arranged that Mr. Caffery should make the principal speech of the day, and the proceedings be brought to a close as promptly as possible afterwards.

That gentleman accordingly mounted the little platform, while Mr. Stoker and the other gentlemen stood around, giving their moral support to the proceedings. At once the crowd was hushed. All were anxious to hear what hope there was of present aid in their troubles. Under the old system, when men were threatened with want, they had to ask themselves the question—'What shall I do to get bread?' In Excelsior this question was put to the Government. The crowd now surrounding Caffery as he began his speech were waiting to see it answered. It was not a crowd such as one sees at a jovial election meeting, when only the impersonal wants of the country have to be considered. Jokes, sarcasms, the love of fun that the mere presence of numbers together generally develops, the sense of humour, the readiness of repartee that spring up spontaneously at the ordinary political meetings, were all wanting. The needs that pressed were too real. They were needs that came home to each one personally.

So they all were still as Caffery began to harangue them. They eyed him with anxious scrutiny, as if to ascertain if he really could and would show them how to get bread. Only the few loafers shambled about the outer fringe of the crowd with an air of indifference. It was a performance that had lost the charm of novelty to them. Three or four street-corner politicians, who were painfully pushing themselves into public notice, in the hope of standing for the House of Representatives in due time, hustled to the front of the crowd, so as to be able to express their feelings for the people by vigorous applause and appropriate exclamations, in aid of the speakers, if they could not get a chance of speaking themselves. With that good feeling which the crowd in Excelsior commonly displayed, room was made for the few women present in front of the stand. There they stood facing their deliverer, not unlike the stricken Israelites looking up to the Divine symbol of help in the wilderness, only now and then turning their faces away from the speaker to hush to repose the restless infants that they carried in their tired arms.

Mr. Caffery began by stating that he would read the resolution that he had the honour to move. It was, 'That it is the acknowledged duty of the Government to provide work for the unemployed at the market rate of wages.'

He said that he always felt for the man who could not get work. But he never felt so strongly as he did now, when he looked upon that crowd of idle but willing workers before him. They were all willing for work if they only could get it. If there was a man among them who was not, would they like to know what he would do with that man? He would put him straight into the Miranda penitentiary and make him work. No flies about that little lot. But they all wanted to get work, yet could not get it; and their honest wives and youngsters wanted food. Was not that a slap-up, downright shame in any land calling itself civilised, let alone Christian? Every citizen who stood there in that meeting before him was worth at least a pound a week to the Province of Excelsior, if he and useful work were brought together. There were some six hundred of them there. So in this unemployed lot alone there was a loss to the public

wealth of the State of at least £30,000 a year. This was a score for the Premier to chalk up and have a good look at. They were all taken a bit unprepared owing to the winter having set in so early. Well, the wage-earners were blamed for a good many things, to be sure. In fact, like the eels, they were getting accustomed to be skinned. But they had not been blamed for the seasons up to this, and he respectfully thought the matter lay between the clerk of the weather and the Government. It was the straight-out duty of the State to provide work for honest men that needed it. Sir Donald MacLever did not deny it. What were the Government for? What were they kept up and paid for? Not for making up political ructions and show, but for the good of the people; and where did the good of the people come in if they were left starving? He did not want to be hard on the Ministers, but he must say straight that they ought to have had their public works determined on and ready beforehand, so that the men could have been put on directly the pinch was felt. There was not so much need in summer, when men could hump their swags and walk the track on the look-out for a job. But when winter sent them all in a crowd into the city, what were they to do unless there was something got ready for them to tackle? If this *laissez-faire* business continued, the best workers would have to make tracks for Amanta, while they had yet a note left in their pocket, leaving their wives and families here to pick up charity; whereas it was the right, the birthright he would say, of every citizen to remain in his own land and to get a living there. Likely enough, when the husbands were driven out of the Province, they would find statisticians and political economy men boxing right round the compass to find out why the population of Excelsior did not increase. However, though the Government had been caught napping, he believed that they were now waking up, rubbing their eyes, and having a look round. He wanted to go in and give them a gentle shake like. The resolution which he moved, when adopted by a representative meeting such as he saw before him, would enable him and the other gentlemen to go to the Premier with the majesty of the people behind them, and demand that the Government should do its

duty, and start different sorts of works, to suit the different needs of the men who were assembled there that day, and the larger number right over the Province whom they represented. Then their sufferings would clear right away like one of their winter fogs when the sun tackled it straight.

Hearty applause followed all the points of this speech and loudly greeted its close. The people felt that Mr. Caffery meant to serve them, and that they might rely upon him to see that the Government did something for them directly. The motion was seconded by the Rev. Simeon Sinclair. A hint was given to him to be brief, as it was not intended to prolong the meeting, and he was brief. He felt for the sufferings of the poor, and was the head of an unsectarian society that did good work among them. Mixed up with his charitable feelings there lurked an ambition, at once enlightened and practical, to be known as the social reformer, the clergyman of advanced liberal views, no mere sayer of smooth things to the well-off in their smug churches. His constant contention was that the Government should put the unemployed upon farms, and he frequently quoted the verse from Proverbs, 'He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread.' He was so persistent in accompanying philanthropic deputations to the Premier upon a wide range of subjects, and spoke so pointedly at them, showing in each case the urgent claim that there was on the State, that Sir Donald had come to regard him as a troublesome person; besides, he always felt contempt for the sanguine, plausible, benevolent type of people. Also, he agreed with Bismarck's objection 'to long-robed politicians, whether feminine or ecclesiastical.' The Rev. Simeon Sinclair was brief, but he managed, in the few minutes that he spoke, to say some effective things for the purpose in hand, which were based chiefly upon the noble injunctions of the Bible to help the poor and those who 'had fallen by the wayside.' In this, as in so many other respects, human society has fallen sadly short of the Divine standard, and the reverend speaker had little difficulty in impressing his audience with that fact.

The motion was carried by acclamation, and Mr. Stoker then proposed the second resolution, which ran thus: 'That

the Government be called upon to commence, without delay, the public works that are required to alleviate, before it is too late, the prevailing distress, and the danger, if it is prolonged, of starvation of the wives and children of those who are without employment among us.' He spoke briefly, for, as he truly said, the resolution spoke for itself. It was seconded by Mr. Eneas Birt, and carried unanimously. The proceedings then closed, and a deputation was formed of the leading men present to conduct the workless workers to the Premier and lay their needs before him.

When the crowd of unemployed, headed by their leaders, arrived at the Public Treasury, Mr. Caffery sent in to request an immediate interview for the Deputation, and as many of the unemployed themselves as the Premier's office would accommodate. Sir Donald at once put aside other business and sent word that he would be pleased to see them, but desired that twelve of the crowd should be selected to represent the rest, as his room was so small. This was readily done, and the party was soon in Sir Donald's presence. Whatever his personal feelings, he realised, and perhaps the more especially as he was connected with the better-off, that his official position required him to pay marked attention to the representatives of the poor.

Mr. Caffery formally introduced them, and handed in the two resolutions which had been adopted at the meeting. Something must be done at once. He gave full particulars of the impoverished condition of many families, and stated generally the relief that was wanted. As a large number of the men were married, it was desired that, as far as was practicable, work should be found for them in or near Miranda, else, if they were sent up country, their families must be supported by charity in the city. Here Sir Donald inquired whether, when any of the married men took work at a distance from town, half of their wages might not be paid direct to their wives and families who remained behind. But Mr. Stoker considered that this would look too like a reflection upon the men, who would naturally prefer to send their families the money themselves. The true way was to find work for them without sending them from home.

For the unmarried men who might be sent up country,

the Government were asked to see that, before they were despatched away to a distance, they were suited in strength and otherwise to the work upon which they were to be engaged. Some variety of employment was pleaded for to meet the case of the weak, the unskilful, and the aged. Mr. Birt, the town missionary, supported this view of the question, stating, from his personal experience, that many were unfit to do rough work. Mr. Blunt, the social reformer, urged that if any of the married men were required to go up country, it should be to some habitable region, where their wives could go with them and their children have the advantage of schooling. He also suggested that, with regard to any men who were sent away from town, arrangements should be made to enable them to vote at elections in whatever district they were registered in.

Sir Donald was most attentive to all the speakers. The only slight friction that happened was while the Rev. Simeon Sinclair was speaking. He spoke rather late, when all were getting tired, and was enlarging upon his favourite remedy of putting the people on farms, and as usual fell back upon his old quotation from Proverbs, chapter xxviii., the first part of verse 19 : 'He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread.' Sir Donald, after a Free land deputation some time before, where the rev. gentleman had cited his favourite text, had told Du Tell to look up the reference, and they found that the verse when completed was this : 'He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread : but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.' Inwardly he was rather ruffled by the sudden coming of the deputation, and personally he had no liking for the Rev. Simeon Sinclair. So he could not refrain from interjecting, as the familiar quotation came out, turning his cold gray eyes upon the speaker, together with the MacLever smile :

'Suppose, my dear sir, we complete the quotation. Perhaps we may derive some instruction from the latter portion of the verse as well as the former.'

It so happened that no one present except Mr. Sinclair and the town missionary, Mr. Birt, knew what the ending of the verse was ; and they were so put out by the satirical interruption that they could not summon on a sudden the

necessary pugnacity to fight the matter, so the rev. gentleman hastily concluded with a feeling reference to the extent of the existing distress. Sir Donald quickly shook off his ill-temper, and made a sympathetic reply to the Deputation. The unexpected need created by the early nature of the season had already engaged the attention of the Government. He and all the Cabinet were deeply impressed by the reports which they had received of the want of employment. He hoped to be able to announce the particulars of the State works that would be undertaken on Monday next.

Mr. Caffery then thanked him, in the name of the Deputation, for his courteous reception of them; and the unemployed dispersed to pass the next two days as best they could, being sustained, however, by the feeling that by Monday the Government would be prepared to look after them. As for Sir Donald, he at once arranged for the special Cabinet that afternoon at the Water Bureau, in order to give effect to his promise to the Deputation. Hence the sudden irruption of Ministers of the Crown upon Slater Scully that our politician had witnessed.

At the Water Bureau Slater Scully forthwith resigned the best arm-chair to his chief, and Walter Crane, in a very deft manner, swept away his master's representative brands—Ministerial, Opposition, and Independent—and consigned them to the cupboard. The position of affairs was then discussed. Sir Donald, in a few words, told them about the Deputation, and the men by whom it was supported. He observed in measured tones—

‘As for the unemployed, there is no doubt there are a good many of them. How can it be otherwise?’ he continued, leaning back in the large arm-chair and looking round the ceiling with a dissatisfied air. ‘How can it be otherwise, when you are always promising to find them work in the city at a wage that they could not earn on the land?’

He seemed to address himself more especially to Slater Scully.

‘But they are starving now,’ that gentleman replied, ‘the wives and children—that’s the ugly fact that faces His Majesty’s Government. The people starve.’

‘Yes, I am afraid that is so,’ slowly answered Sir Donald. ‘At any rate, we inherit a system of Government to help all and sundry, and all and sundry want our help now and evermore. The question is what we are to do.’

‘Feed them—feed them,’ exclaimed the generous Minister of the Water Bureau. Then, as he threw himself into a restful attitude, he continued, speaking in a deliberate, sententious manner :

‘It is the foundation duty of the Government, the bed-rock of State obligations to citizens, the easy first, with the rest nowhere, of Ministerial responsibility—to see that the people are fed. We would be the mere simulacrum of a Government, nay, a fearful phantasmagoria, a *camera obscura* of the real thing, a mere spectre——’

‘Do stop a moment, Slater Scully,’ interposed Du Tell, who had been with Sir Donald when he received the Deputation, and was fully impressed with the need of immediate action. ‘The point is, what works can we get ready by Monday? There is no time to be lost. We must find work for at least five hundred. Humanity forbids delay.’ As he made the last remark he looked keenly round the circle. He then added in an aside to Sir Donald :

‘I have gone over the lists, and I find that next session Caffery will lead from fifteen to twenty straight votes.’

The Cabinet were all agreed that the Government must act without delay, and Sir Donald closed the short preliminary conversation by observing in his absolute manner :

‘Yes, we must act, and act decisively. There is no one to object if we do too much ; but if we don’t do enough, why, then’—and here he smiled his grim smile again—‘why, then, we will soon be among the unemployed ourselves.’

The revenue was in a fairly good condition, so a liberal scheme of public works was soon resolved upon. Some of these were designed to be immediately useful to the country ; others were expected to become so in time ; others again were what might be called national luxuries—expensive buildings that were justified ostensibly upon the ground that they were needed by the public, but were really taken in hand because of the work they would give and the money that they would distribute in wages. None of them would

have been undertaken at that particular time were it not for the need of providing for the unemployed. A large proportion of them were to be done about the city, so as to provide for the married men. But a good deal of employment was offered for clearing forest land, with the arrangement that the worker could become tenant, upon easy terms, of the land which he cleared. Some painting of public buildings, repairing of fences, and work about State gardens was provided for the weaker workers. The local boards throughout the Province were urged to put in hand whatever could be undertaken in the country. Even the poor churches were appealed to to spend what they could in the cause of labour. Amid these vigorous efforts to give help to labour, no notice was taken of the mercantile, scholastic, clerical, or genteel paupers.

The mixed motives that actuated men in dealing with this problem of the unemployed were not inaptly reflected in the different actors in this movement that has engaged our attention. Mr. Caffery was urgent a good deal no doubt because he really felt for the unemployed, but also because every enlargement of the Government functions as an employer was a step towards the realisation of the full Socialist programme, when the Government will be the employer of all. Anything leading to this was as grateful to him as industrial competition and private enterprise were distasteful. Obviously the more the State employed, the more it might employ; and as its range of employment widened it would find in time that, in order to be fair, or even to be able to work effectively, it must employ all.

Sir Donald MacLever accepted the burden as part of the day's work, without asking questions as to how it came there. Simply, it was one of the things that the people demanded. The politician has to provide for the day that is passing over him. He was the leader of the Liberal party, and intended to remain so. In order to do this he must accept whatever progressive ideas were brought to the fore. It was better he should do this than a worse man. The wisdom or unwisdom of the thing was an abstract question that did not enter into practical politics. As for Du Tell, he felt deeply upon the subject when he totted up

the Division Lists. Slater Scully regarded only the distress, and smiled in a vague manner at the warnings of political economy and perturbation about remote consequences. The Rev. Simeon Sinclair was full of humanity, slightly leavened by a love for personal distinction. He believed that he had a mission, and at the same time derived a pleasure, which he scarcely acknowledged to himself, in being regarded as the minister with large, bold views of social questions, who had too much practical power about him to be contented merely with the singing of hymns.

Mr. Blunt, the social reformer, and Mr. Birt, the town missionary, were simply charitable. The most powerful factors in the movement were Caffery and Stoker, for they were deeply in earnest; they regarded all objects in politics as trivial compared with the one they had in hand; the success of their personal careers was bound up with its success, and they had the force of numbers behind them. For underlying the whole matter was the determining fact that all the unemployed had votes. That they were failures on the industrial side of life did not interfere with their power on the political side. They still governed the distribution of wealth which others produced and saved up. And for one man who was wealthy, there were hundreds who were hard pressed. Caffery could then truly say that not only ought they to be looked after, but they must be looked after. Whoever paid, so long as there was any one to pay, they must be provided for. Thus it was that the Government in *Excelsior* came, almost as a matter of course, to drop into the position which was defined in the first resolution: 'That it is the acknowledged duty of the State to provide work for the unemployed at the market rate of wages.' The full meaning and necessary consequences of that declaration were never deliberately considered. It was drifted into. The practical limitation to its scope was the want of pence.

The following week the combined deputation from the towns of Brassville, Leadville, and Tinville came to Miranda to see the Minister and invoke his aid in dealing with the rabbits. It consisted of the mayors of the towns, the presidents of the District Boards, several Members of Parliament, among whom were the Honourable Mr. Lamborn, of

the Senate, and our politician, with Mr. Bunker and other Members from the House of Representatives, together with a large number of local celebrities, prominent among whom was Mr. Birnie Farrar, the Town Clerk of Glooscap, which was the centre of the district where the rabbits most prevailed.

Mr. Theodore Bunker, the Member for Leadville, had undertaken to introduce the Deputation.

Introducing deputations is a weighty part of the Member's function in all countries which enjoy popular government, from England downwards. To perform it properly a good deal of trouble has to be taken, and considerable discretion is required. The time at which the Government is to be approached must be well chosen, not too late, nor yet too soon. Then the *personnel* of the deputation has to be arranged, and on the appointed day the members of it have to be met before the Minister is approached ; the precise demands to be made have to be agreed upon, the line of advocacy arranged, and the speakers appointed. A good deal of skill is required in arranging who shall *not* speak. Upon the gentleman who heads the deputation rests the duty of introducing its members formally to the Minister, and explaining generally what is wanted. He then calls upon the appointed speakers in turn, and he has to endeavour to keep any inexperienced men from saying too much, or saying the wrong thing, and possibly exposing some weak point in the case that they are presenting.

It had been arranged that the members of the Deputation should forgather at eleven o'clock on the appointed day at the Tramway Arms Hotel, where the travellers who would come from the country could get some refreshment, and the final arrangements would be made for meeting the Minister. It was wisely determined not to weary him with too many speeches ; the more so as it was known that the Minister of Lands being absent, owing to indisposition, his place was to be taken by Mr. Slater Scully, who had thus, during his colleague's absence, a double set of deputations to receive.

When it was half-past eleven o'clock all was arranged for the advance upon the Minister ; but it was found, on mustering the forces, that Mr. Fred. Dubbs, M.H.R. for the

Tinville district, and his contingent had not yet arrived ; so Mr. Theodore Bunker and the others determined to go on to the Water Bureau and await the coming there of the Tinville party ; and accordingly all were marshalled in due order into four capacious cabs, which had been engaged by Mr. Birnie Farrar, the Town Clerk of Glooscap, who, as acting for that part of the district that was most concerned, took a prominent part in the arrangements.

Walter Crane had been for some time on the look-out for them on the top of the long flight of steps going up to the Water Bureau. When he saw the four vehicles coming up, he hurried in to inform Mr. Thomas Blinks, the Secretary of the Department of Lands and Agriculture, who had come over to attend the Minister, as this was a matter that concerned his Department. He was back at the steps as Mr. Bunker and his party came up, bowing low, and with a pleased expression upon his aged countenance, as if it made him quite happy to meet them. He considered it a distinctly respectable deputation, including so many Members of Parliament and several substantial-looking country gentlemen. Crane had rather a leaning towards the landed interest, and preferred to the spare, restless city man the solid countryman who owned fat oxen ; though he had all the Irishman's indignation against the oppressive landowner who would grind the faces of the poor. It was now twelve o'clock, and Mr. Bunker thought it better to go in with the main portion of the Deputation, and let Mr. Dubbs and the Tinville men follow them in when they arrived. So Crane led them down the passage to the Minister's room, and ushered them forward in a reverential manner, and with some sense of responsibility upon his part in connection with the demonstration.

Mr. Slater Scully, with Mr. Thomas Blinks by his side, to keep him right on his facts, received them in his open, jovial manner, bidding them the time of day, and asking, to begin with, could he oblige them in any way. Mr. Bunker bore himself with much gravity. Indeed, the duty he now had in hand belonged to a serious part of his work in life, and he spared no pains to perform it properly. He was in a slight difficulty about Dubbs and the Tinville men, and

thought it better to mention their temporary absence to the Minister, so that, if he went on at first without them, at the Minister's desire, they could not blame him.

'Dubbs unpunctual? Dubbs behind time? Then fall Cæsar! It's the first time I have known him so. But pray proceed, Mr. Bunker—make me acquainted with these worthy gentlemen here, and perhaps before we have got thus far into the bowels of the question, Dubbs and the men of Tinville will be here.'

Accordingly the party settled into their places, Crane bringing up chairs as they were wanted, and when all were seated, retiring to his own perch at the end of the room, to be ready if required for anything, and to listen attentively, as was his wont, to the proceedings.

Mr. Bunker then introduced them to the Minister. He was at pains to be accurate in giving the name and description of each one correctly, right down to the town clerks and other municipal officers, beginning with Mr. Birnie Farrar, as he had managed all the details of the deputation.

Sure enough, when he had got to the end of the introductions, a knock was heard at the door, and Mr. Dubbs and the Tinville men entered. All looked round to greet the missing wing of the party, and our politician, as he nodded to Dubbs and some of those whom he knew, was somewhat surprised to see the face of a new-comer who followed in at the back—none other than the keen, grievance-laden countenance of Jacob Shumate, the shoemaker of Glooscap. His dark eyes took a sweeping glance round the room, and then he sat down upon about the last chair in the back row. Birnie Farrar had mentioned to Bunker that he suspected Jacob intended to come, but with what object or for what purpose he could not find out. He had kept to himself on the journey up, and he slipped in now, coming not with the men of Glooscap, but apparently on his own account. Mr. Theodore Bunker greeted the new-comers, and commenced calling their names over to the Minister. When he had gone through all down to where Jacob was, experienced as he was in such matters, he felt quite uncertain what to do. He knew Jacob of old, and that he was a dangerous man. He had no right to appear with a deputation—certainly not

to speak at one—unless he belonged to it. Still, it would not be wise to cause trouble till the question was raised by Jacob Shumate trying to speak, if he did mean to make the attempt. One of the most obvious rules of life for the sensible politician is to make as few enemies of any sort as possible. So he only blandly remarked, ‘Ah, Mr. Shumate, you here?’

‘So it would seem, Mr. Bunker,’ replied the shoemaker, as he inclined forward in his chair with a half-bow towards the popular Member. His soured but self-reliant look seemed to proclaim openly—

‘Yes, I have a grievance, and I am able to look after it without your assistance.

Mr. Bunker glanced at the perturbed countenance for a moment or two with an aspect of mild inquiry, and in his most conciliatory manner, in order to pave the way for any explanation. But none was forthcoming, so he then turned to the Minister and explained shortly the object of the Deputation. The districts represented were overrun with rabbits. Ruin threatened the farmer and the grazier. Their demands, the Minister would see, were not extravagant. Their request was that he would put a sum on the Estimates to purchase for general use the well-known Brand’s Patent for poisoning wheat to destroy rabbits. The ‘people’ would be prepared to pay half the cost of laying down the stuff, the Government paying the other half; for which sharing of expense between Government and ‘the people’ in public improvements there were several precedents in the affairs of the Province. Mr. Bunker laid stress upon his pronunciation of ‘people,’ to show that it was a distinctly popular thing that he was proposing. Unless this was done there was no use in the people holding their land. As Government tenants, it was impossible that they could continue to pay their rents, and the districts affected would become depopulated, and the State rails and trams would have nothing to carry. Rents were in arrear in several localities at present. He begged to call upon the Honourable Mr. Lamborn.

Mr. Lamborn was, as the reader may imagine, a very respectable-looking man—indeed, a weighty and solid-looking man. His voice was deep, also grave in tone, and he had a

natural, plain-speaking way of expressing himself, as if he felt that no human being could question the fairness of what he was saying ; and he would, from time to time, look round the room to see if any man could contradict him.

He said that what Mr. Bunker had stated was quite true. Unless something was done, ruin stared most of them in the face. No crop was safe unless it was wire-netted ; and as for grass, it cost a small fortune to keep on poisoning the land. They only asked the Government to bear a hand. They were willing to bear a hand themselves, too.

Here Mr. Blinks, the Secretary for Lands, whispered something to the Minister, and Slater Scully thereupon interposed.

‘You must excuse me, gentlemen, as this great question is rather new to me. But a little bird has whispered to me that the Government already supply the wire netting on long terms of repayment, and free from the noxious and burdensome imposition of interest.’

Mr. Lamborn admitted that that was so. But who put up and paid for the posts and rails ? Were the people expected to do everything ? He went on to say in his emphatic manner that, by right, the Government should do much more than was asked, since the rabbits were chiefly bred upon the Crown lands and then came on to them. But yet they were willing to pay half-cost of laying the poison if the Government bought the Patent. He then looked around him, and came to a natural peroration inspired by his deep feeling upon the subject. If they were to be saved, the Government must come to the rescue promptly. Delay meant death to the small farmers. He appealed to the Minister as a man and as a father not to spread desolation over a lot of homes—and, he might add, happy homes.

Slater Scully looked up through the large spectacles in some amazement at the mere idea that he could do such a thing, and was beginning a deprecating reply, ‘Touch me not so near——’ when Mr. David Blow, who represented the cattle interest of Glooscap, interposed with a brief but emphatic expression of his views. These, upon this occasion, were much the same as those which he held in reference to the proposal that the parents should devote a Saturday

afternoon to making the fence around the State school. And he fell naturally into the same form of expression which the reader may remember he used with reference to that suggestion. He declared that it was not the square thing by a long way for the Government to put them on short commons about this rabbit business.

Some of the other gentlemen enlarged upon the serious nature of the evil and the reasonable nature of their demands ; and Mr. Birnie Farrar gave full statistics as to the extent and great value of the lands that were in danger. On this Mr. Blinks again whispered to the Minister, and Slater Scully remarked with solemnity—

‘Would it be possible, my respected friends, that the Municipal Boards of this most valuable district could be induced to give something in order to supplement the short commons that have been so feelingly alluded to?’

To this Mr. Hedger, as the lawyer of the deputation, briefly replied that the Acts of Parliament under which they acted did not allow of any such application of their funds.

‘Would, then, the landowners agree to raise the interest on the purchase-money of the Patent for a term of years?’ inquired the Minister, prompted thereto by the frugal-minded and assiduous Blinks.

Mr. David Blow felt that this would be impossible, owing to the simple fact that the smaller landowners had nothing to give. There seemed to be nothing for it, then, but the accustomed resort to the State chest for the money. The Minister was beginning to weave a conciliatory answer to the Deputation :

‘Mr. Bunker and gentlemen, I must say dispassionately that I feel satisfied within my own convictions that I can report to my honourable colleague who presides over this Department, and who, I hope, will soon be here again in the full bloom of recovered health, that you have made a most striking—indeed, I must say, most moving—case for the Government——’

When he had got thus far, Jacob Shumate, who had been pushing his way up to the front, interposed, and, with a deep bow, began :

‘Honourable Minister——’

Directly he had risen from his seat at the end of the room, Birnie Farrar had whispered to Bunker to object to any intervention from one who was not included in the Deputation that was nominated by the districts concerned. He did not know what Jacob Shumate was going to say ; but he had an instinctive feeling, based upon prolonged experience, that it must be something unpleasant, and might be something dangerous. Mr. Bunker, as having the conduct of the proceedings, felt bound to interpose here, so he observed in a bland tone :

‘ Really, Mr. Shumate, I am afraid we cannot have this. The Honourable the Minister is only entitled to hear upon this occasion those who were duly designated by the people to interview him.’

He added with a smile, in his most amiable manner, leaning over towards the shoemaker and speaking in a lower tone :

‘ You know, Jacob, you can arrange for another deputation on your own account, if you like.’

‘ I am much obliged to you, Mr. Bunker, for your kind offer. I must admit too that your constitutional views are quite correct.’

Jacob Shumate spoke, having his head sarcastically inclined upon one side, and this time with an expression of pleasure on his face. He continued :

‘ I am quite aware that I have to be nominated by the people to entitle me to address the Honourable the Minister upon this occasion. And I beg respectfully to state that I am so nominated. Persons who own land do not constitute the whole of the population about Glooscap—whatever they may do in other localities.’

Here Mr. Blinks again whispered to the Minister, and Slater Scully addressed the shoemaker in an affable manner. He was quite interested, not to say amused, at this unexpected apparition.

‘ My good friend, may I ask whom you represent ? For whom do you stand and who stands behind you ?’

‘ And where is his authority ?’ interjected Birnie Farrar.

‘ In reply to the Honourable the Minister, I would respectfully state that I represent the struggling rabbit-

trappers of Glooscap and the district, making together several hundred souls, many of their bodies being, I regret to say, ill fed and scantily clad. As to the inquisition of the respected Town Clerk as to where my authority is, I beg to hand in my nomination by the people. It is not, I must admit, on parchment, and there was no wax convenient in their humble homes for sealing it ; still, as they are all human beings who sign it, and indeed citizens, I hope that the Town Clerk will not hold the objection to be fatal.'

And Jacob slowly, and with great deliberation, unfolded and spread out upon the table a very soiled sheet of foolscap, upon which was written his appointment to represent the undersigned on the Rabbit Deputation before the Minister. The undersigned for the most part wrote their signatures in a finished style of handwriting. A few signed in the clumsy, blurred manner that marked the old days of imperfect education. The shoemaker with bended head glanced round the circle of civic magnates and men of broad acres with an evident sense of triumph, as he presented his credentials, while the magnates and broad acre men looked on with a heavy, puzzled air, as if not knowing how to meet this unexpected attack in the rear. Mr. Birnie Farrar wanted Mr. Theodore Bunker to object that Shumate should have got an appointment for a separate day for his side of the question. But some new and rather disturbing lights were breaking in upon the prudent mind of the Member for Leadville. As he glanced over the names, he recognised some of those who were electors within his own district. Then the cause of the trappers was obviously the cause of the poor man. They had no land at all. They only caught the rabbits on other people's land and Crown lands. But each of them had as good a vote as Mr. Lamborn himself. He thought it would be better to hear Jacob Shumate, and whispered to Birnie Farrar that it was safest to do so—'under protest, you know,' he added, to placate that gentleman. The Town Clerk, by no means appeased, was turning to enforce his objection and speaking eagerly into the Member's ear, when the Minister cut short further discussion upon the subject by exclaiming—

'Well, well, Mr. Shumate, high authority enjoins us to

give each man thine ear, but to reserve thy judgment. So pray unbosom your soul as to these hapless and multitudinous rodents, dire enemy, it seems, in your district to man and beast, and known to science, my learned friend here, Mr. Blinks, informs me, as the *Lepus cuniculus*.'

And, undisturbed by Blinks's look of astonishment at this unexpected and hitherto to him unknown information about the scientific name of the rabbit, Slater Scully glared about in a pleased manner as he lay back in his chair to listen while Shumate would unfold his tale. He enjoyed the prospect of hearing something unexpected on the subject. Mr. David Blow, however, who had been regarding the shoemaker's interruption in a dazed manner, began to realise that there was danger in it. His thoughts, though slow to ignite, upon due attrition did burn up within him. Looking round straight at Jacob, with all the weight of the man who represented the cattle interest, he exclaimed, taking up the thread from Bunker's objection, which was as far as he had got :

'Yes, yes, Mr. Shumate, what *do* you want? You ain't inconvenienced by our poisoning, are you? You aren't on for cobbling up odd lots of objections to our clearing our lands of varmint, are you?' And then he indulged in what was for him something without precedent, a stroke of sarcasm at the shoemaker :

'We don't ask you to eat our poison, do we? Though I don't let on that it nor anything else would quiet you.'

Jacob Shumate, glowing with satisfaction and rising to the occasion, began his reply in a subdued and polite tone.

'In response to what the Honourable the Minister and also the honourable representative of the cattle interest here have asked, I beg leave to observe, most respectfully, that neither I nor the poor fellows whom I represent have the slightest objection to Mr. David Blow and other princely proprietors clearing their vast estates of whatever they may please. That is a matter entirely for their own consideration.'

'Then what are you getting on and riled about, Mr. Shumate?' pursued Mr. Blow.

'If the honourable representative of the cattle interest will permit me, I have not stated, as far as I am aware, that

we were riled about anything. The only possible repugnance we feel—perhaps the Honourable the Minister will pardon us for it—is to having the money taken out of our pockets in order to take the bread out of our mouths.'

Jacob then glanced round with bent head at Mr. David Blow, who kept looking at him in a helpless manner, much as one of his oxen would survey some intruding stranger who was approaching him. Following up his thrust, he added :

'We have no desire, certainly, to eat Mr. Blow's poison. In fact, what we do hope is that we may be allowed to eat our crust without it. We only ask,' he continued, with a resigned air, 'to be allowed still to make a living—even a precarious one—by trapping rabbits.'

'Where are we now—where are we now?' exclaimed Slater Scully, looking round the company in a half-contemplative and a half-pleased manner. He was rather enjoying this unexpected display of conflicting human motives. To see several unhappy creatures dangling and twisting from the gallows in a confused manner was said to have a special fascination for Beau Selwyn. The twistings and strugglings of men in wordy conflict had a similar stimulating effect on Slater Scully. It was to him one of the chief alleviations of the long hours of boredom in the House of Representatives. So he repeated as he looked round :

'Where are we now? Stands Glooscap where it did?'

Theodore Bunker felt that the situation was getting serious. He, as the general in command of the Deputation, must take immediate steps to meet this unexpected danger. So, in order to get time to arrange some compromise, if possible, while Shumate was speaking, he expressed to the Minister the willingness, and even the desire, of his party that Mr. Shumate should state his claim fully, and Slater Scully waved the shoemaker to proceed.

This invitation to speak was precisely what Shumate desired. To make a set speech at any time was a pleasure to him, and if he had a grievance to talk about he was quite happy—before a Minister of the Crown, too, it was delightful. Slater Scully relished the keen thrusts of the shoemaker, and, as a popular Minister, desired to show all deference to the advocate of the poor man.

Jacob had carefully prepared himself for the opportunity, and he had put a plausible case for the trappers. No question, he said, arose as to people clearing their own lands of rabbits as much as they pleased. If it was expensive to do this, owing to the vast extent of any one's land, all he could say was that he tendered the landowners his deep sympathy. (Dark glance at Lamborn and Le Fanu.) The proposal before the Minister was to take his money for the purpose. The rabbit-trappers, poverty-stricken though they were, still did contribute to the State Revenue; though, to be sure, to persons whose path of life was paved with gold, the amount of their contributions might be regarded as beneath notice. Still, they were felt by them. Out of the State Revenue, thus partly made up of their own money, the great landowners were to be paid for clearing their estates of rabbits; and at the same time the industry that those he represented lived by was to be destroyed, and with it a cheap and useful food for the poor. The traps, the nets, the implements that they used in their work were all taxed heavily at the Customs.

Further, to suit the private owners, the Crown lands, now mostly consisting of barren hills, were also to be poisoned, and thus rendered unsafe and useless for the purposes of the trappers. If the rabbits did eat some of the grass of the large estates, he would like to see a short sum worked out of the proportion which this loss bore to the gain by the unearned increment of the land. If the Honourable the Minister listened to this application, the very least he could do would be to compensate the persons whom he represented for destroying their means of living. He would not at present dwell upon the compensation that would be due to the poor of the Province generally for depriving them of a cheap and wholesome food. As everything was done in Excelsior in the name of the poor man, this would be a good opportunity, he respectfully submitted, for the Government to show how deeply it sympathised with him.

Jacob Shumate, as he concluded, looked round the disconcerted circle with exultation in his countenance, the display of which, however, he suppressed as well as he could.

Slater Scully enjoyed having the two sides of the question agitated before him, but while he saw both views he grasped neither, and he was now perplexed as the time approached that he was to decide between them. His natural wish was to satisfy all parties, and he had the Minister's feeling against making enemies among a considerable class of voters. Personally, he did not like the idea of depriving the poor trappers of their means of gaining a livelihood.

He was a good deal relieved, then, when Theodore Bunker, who was himself moved by very similar considerations, threw out a suggestion, merely for consideration, as he said, that the Patent should be bought by the Government, and that a Government contribution, at present undefined, should be made to meet the cost of laying the poison on lands that had been alienated from the Crown ; but that the State lands should be left free for the operations of the trapper, that all his implements should be admitted free of duty at the Customs, and that a Government bonus should be paid upon the export of frozen rabbits, so as to keep up the price. This was accepted all round as a fair solution of the difficulty. Jacob Shumate was so elated at the general success of his intervention that he could not concentrate his attention so as to criticise it closely. He still felt in a vague manner that sufficient weight had not been given to the fact that the rabbits only consumed a small part of the unearned increment of the rich man's land. But did the great public who was to pay the bill of both parties to this settlement object? Apparently not. At least, in the person of its representative, Slater Scully, it appeared to be pleased. The Minister dismissed both sides with his blessing.

'Farewell, gentlemen,' he exclaimed. 'The right thing has been accomplished. Even-handed justice has been done—justice to the individual and justice to the country. The only unhappy parties to the settlement are those hapless little rodents, the *Lepus cuniculus* of my friend here, that both of ye will now be slaughtering by a grand and unprecedented combination of poison and traps.'

And so the Deputation withdrew, and at a jovial lunch at the Tramway Arms the members congratulated each

other upon their success, and upon the generous, public-spirited views of the Minister. All except Jacob Shumate, who went off on his own account, to join some Populist friends at the People's Coffee Palace, where, after partaking of tea and biscuits, he spent the time till the afternoon train in criticising the proceedings at the Deputation, and expatiating generally on the grievances of the trappers.

Walter Crane had been an attentive listener to the discussion at the Deputation. He sat on his stool at the end of the room in his usual meek attitude, but making keen mental notes of what was going on. The experience he gained in this way was one of the most valuable elements of his political education. Next Sunday, at the festive board at his nephew's cottage in Grubb Lane, he gave at leisure the full details of the proceedings of the Deputation, and its happy termination for all parties.

'Very powerful orator that Mr. Shumate—shoemaker or no shoemaker. My word, I can tell ye,' he said, throwing himself back in a free-and-easy manner, and nodding in a significant way to the company—'my word, I can tell ye, he tossed some of those big land bosses like one of their own bulls would. He did, I tell ye. Sarve them right. Not like real landed gentry: trying on to take away the poor man's food—and his living too!'

'Well, if they take away his food, it follows up straight enough they take his living, I suppose,' said Ben Mule, the argumentative cabman.

'Ye needn't be driving ahead so fast, Ben,' said Crane, with some dignity. 'Them rabbits are food to the poor man as eats them and they are living for the work they make for the trapper who catches them. D'ye see now?'

'I can see no call to interfere with them rabbits,' said the nephew; 'they are sweet enough to eat and handy to cook. You can think them chicken if you shut your blinkers.'

'Ye see, it's this yer way,' said Ben Mule. 'They are too cheap and common like for the 'stocracy. If they were a crown each, my word, wouldn't the big ones take on to them! And there it is, the big 'uns have their way all

along the road. Talk of the people in Excelsior, where are you? If you talk of the big 'uns, you are on the spot, right enough.'

'Ay, so I suppose, Wally,' said Mick, 'you had a lot of the big 'uns there, going on about the rabbits and their feelings for the farmer and the poor man?'

'To be sure. A great many fine gentlemen there, and grand estates they have for certain,' replied Crane. 'Mr. Shumate waited a bit behind and told me. Mr. Le Fanu and Mr. Lamborn, and all the rest, very fine gentlemen indeed. But why don't they think of the poor man trying to live, let alone paying for his bit of land to Guv'ment?'

'I'll tell ye when they'll be well quit of the rabbits,' said Ben Mule, looking up as if a new light had struck him.

'When's that, young feller?' asked Mick.

'When they go where the land won't go after them nor the rabbits neither,' answered the cabman.

'Well, and the boss promised to pay both on 'em, did he?' inquired the nephew.

'He did that, Mick,' replied the uncle, taking a long drink of tea. When he had finished, he added, with a significant nod to his relation—

'But not out of his own pocket, me boy.'

The recess was now drawing to its close, and politicians were busy speculating what would be the leading proposal of the Government for the legislation of the new session. For every Government is expected under the English system to announce each new political year a long and, if possible, striking array of fresh measures. It is a political rather than a social need. A healthy community, like a healthy man, often wants to be let alone. Legislative measures are, like medicines, needed in the case of any ailment in the body politic, also to provide for the changes caused by social growth. But the real need for changes does not come round periodically every year like the King's Speech. This habit of responsible Government has the advantage of securing early attention to all popular wants. But it also tends to create fictitious wants, and to foster the love for having something new continually upon the boards. Thus whenever there is any social depression or difficulty, people are apt to look at

once to some new Government proposal as the only possible relief; whereas the true remedy may rest rather with the people themselves, and may require some abstinence or exertion upon their part which would perhaps be more difficult, but would also be more effective, than any new legislation.

One reason why a long list of important measures and reforms was proposed each year in *Excelsior* was that so few of them were carried through during the session. If they had all been given effect to, the Province would have been in the position of a man who should seek to keep himself in health by undergoing one or two operations, at least, every year, besides trying a system of massage and electric baths to stimulate his vitality and prevent any tendency to the insidious advances of crippling rheumatism. But the Legislature wisely refused to accept and assimilate more than a certain proportion each year of what was offered, and had sundry methods of its own of making what it did not want disappear, otherwise than by actually swallowing them. They were thus left to garnish the board for the next time, when, if it was still so desired, they were put under the table as before.

However, Sir Donald and his Ministry were busy preparing their catalogue of measures. It was easy to fill in the ordinary Bills, many of which figured year after year in the Governor's speech, and which were known among the legislators as 'hardy annuals.' The difficulty was as to what should be the leading and striking measure of the year; and this was made the greater by the fact that there was nothing then that the people of the Province were very eager about. Still, there were several proposals, any one of which would make a good stir in the political world, and all of which were advanced in their character, and might therefore be properly taken up by progressive politicians. The Ministry had held a series of Cabinet meetings in order to consider these.

Du Tell asked Secker his opinion privately as to the best thing for the Government to take up.

'Why, as for urgent things, they stare you in the face, my dear sir. There is that question of the hour—Pensions to the Aged Poor. That is bound to come. With Fame it

is often first come first served. Why should not Sir Donald take up and get the credit for that great measure?’

Secker spoke this time sincerely. Not only did he believe in helping the poor liberally, but he felt what a decisive effect a general pension system must have upon the interests of the State workers. If the State were to pension every one, what should it not do for its own faithful servants?

‘Yes. A right good tip, well worth considering,’ said Du Tell, speaking in a deliberate manner, partly to himself. As the two shook hands, about to part, Du Tell stood for a moment apparently contemplating the broad vest of the Secretary, really anxious to know what Mons. Froessolecque and the *Sweet-Brier* would be likely to want done. At last he said:

‘And our friend of the *Sweet-Brier*?’

‘He, sir? You know him. He is a truly advanced man. He holds for a universal pension, so as to relieve the poor from any stigma in taking it.’

‘And the money?’ interposed Du Tell, with an inquisitive look at the Secretary.

‘Well, as he says, he makes a calculation, does Mons. Froessolecque, that the realised wealth of Excelsior comes to so many millions, and a tax of ten per cent upon that would do it. For myself, I don’t quite hold with my friend there. I say, begin with the poor. Don’t raise difficulties at first. You can easily increase the number of the recipients, and also the pension in time. You may go on, though you cannot go back.’

Du Tell that very evening explained to Sir Donald Secker’s views about the Pensions and the probable attitude of the *Sweet-Brier*. Though it was not the leading paper of the Metropolitan Press, it was the organ of the pugnacious party, of the more determined wing of the Populists. In popular Governments, the thoroughgoing people are the real power. They may not get everything that they want at once, but all desire to conciliate them. All stand in awe of the aggressive forces of the Social State, and seek to placate them and make alliances with them, which are more or less sincere. Under the aristocratic or middle-class system of Government extreme people are rather suppressed; under full Democracy they are rather exalted. A man of

very mediocre talents, who would never make a figure so long as things went on quietly, suddenly proposes to sponge out the National Debt. The thing is not done, but the daring confiscator attracts general attention and becomes a considerable man.

Ultimately, Sir Donald and the Cabinet decided that the grand Liberal measure of the session should be a Bill to establish a system of Pensions to the Aged Poor. It would not be correct to say that the measure was taken up as the result of a matured public opinion upon the subject. It had its immediate origin in a political exigency to do something striking. There was behind it a general wish to provide for the aged poor, without any very close scrutiny as to what it was wisest to do. The method of procedure represented the change from statesmen leading people to people leading statesmen. The Government accepted what they thought would please the people. Later on, when the Government proposal was announced, most public men fell in with it. A politician who would criticise some generous plan as too extravagant and as calculated in time to sap habits of self-reliance and foresight, would be denounced as one who was indifferent to the wants of the aged poor; or, at least, as one who set up his own opinion about things, and claimed to be a superior sort of person. So the proposition that the man who gave his youth to build up a country had the right to be pensioned by that country in old age was repeated upon all sides. It came about rather as an expression of popular feeling than as a result of the public judgment.

Accordingly, when the Governor's speech announced at the opening of the session 'a generous measure of provision for the aged poor,' there was a general agreement expressed with the proposal. The particulars of the Government plan could not be known till Sir Donald, later on, introduced the Government Bill. In the meantime the public talked about the subject and the Press discussed it. The *Sweet-Brier* warned the Government that the pension must be liberal in amount, and free from all suspicion of being given as a charity. It was to be paid as a right, just as earlier in life the worker was paid his daily wage.

In the interval before the introduction of this leading measure private members were able to bring forward some of their Bills. This was the great opportunity for the display of what are vulgarly called 'Fads'—the Fad Legislative. The author of an old Dictionary, after observing that 'Faddle' is corrupted from 'To Fiddle,' declares that it is 'a low word.' Nevertheless, those who maintain Fads, and who moreover are in a position to claim a hearing for them, are not people to be lightly despised. A Fad is often a half-truth. You have to be careful that, while rejecting the Fad, you are not involved in the denial of the half-truth. This caution particularly applies to Fads in Parliament, and it is this that makes Faddists in the political arena people not, as we have said, to be lightly despised. They are indeed quite troublesome people—not to say dangerous. They are so indifferent to other people's difficulties with regard to their Fads. They seem rather to enjoy them. The political Faddist generally sits for some safe constituency, which does not object to his Fad ; possibly which returns him on account of his Fad. So he sits secure aloft, like the gods of Epicurus, either indifferent to the perplexities of poor political mortals or amused at them.

The chief Bill, however, brought in this session by a private Member was one that had got beyond the 'faddy' stage and had emerged into the higher sphere of practical politics. This was a Bill which had been introduced by Mr. M'Grorty, the late Minister of Education and Public Knowledge, to enable women to be elected to Parliament and to act as Members of the Executive Council of the Province. Mr. M'Grorty was a warm supporter of Woman's Rights, but there could be no doubt that his prompt advocacy of this measure at the present time was stimulated by the fact that Sir Donald MacLever, the Premier, when a short time before he was waited upon by a deputation from the Executive of the Woman's Rights League and requested to propose this reform as a part of the Government policy, had given a most unsatisfactory answer. He had replied, that while he fully admitted that women were entitled to this further grant of their rights, yet he thought it would be better to defer claiming it till they had acquired more experience.

In reply to the inquiries of Miss Gazelle, the Hon. Secretary of the Brassville Branch, as to how they were to get experience so long as they were debarred by law from even trying to do the work, and also what experience of politics young people of twenty-one had when they began to exercise the right of voting, he could only reply that the cases were not on all-fours, without being able to show where they differed. When Miss Gazelle pressed home her point, he became a little annoyed, and he turned upon her both a vexed and a slightly jeering countenance as he replied, the gray eyes twinkling at her, 'My good young lady, surely you are young enough to wait a while.'

Miss Gazelle was certainly young enough to wait, yet this reply gave much offence, as it seemed to make light of the business character of the deputation. The whole affair offered the Opposition a good opening, Mr. M'Grorty thought, to aim at the Government a quiet blow, while at the same time advancing Woman's cause.

Since the Suffrage had been secured, the Woman's Rights League of Excelsior had directed its efforts to organise and use Woman's vote so as to compel the Legislature to do them justice in other respects. They held a general meeting once a year, either in the capital or at some important centre of the Province, at which women delegates from all parts of the land discussed public questions that were of interest to them. This year their attention had been chiefly directed to the consideration of the fact that Woman's vote could do little to improve Parliament so long as women themselves were excluded by law from making their influence felt there. They only asked, since now the country had decided that they should take their part in politics, to be allowed to do so effectively. They passed two resolutions, declaring, firstly, that the Legislature as at present constituted was admittedly incompetent to remedy the social ills that oppressed their country. And secondly, that the obvious remedy was to accept the proffered aid of one-half of the people who were now prohibited from helping in the social regeneration of the race.

They followed up their resolutions by a manifesto calling upon the Parliament, such as it was, to set right

meanwhile several wrongs that women suffered under, such as unequal marriage laws, unjust health laws, the custody of children, women's claim to equal wages with men, and other matters in regard to which the equality of the sexes was impaired. But in the very front they put the claim to sit in Parliament. And the Honourable Mr. M'Grorty not only sympathised with their object, but saw very clearly that, if the House could be induced to pass his Bill, it would be a triumph over the Government after the half-hearted utterances of the Premier. Thus the merits of the question itself became involved in the attempt, on the one hand, to embarrass the Government, and then the effort of the Government to checkmate the movement simply in their own defence.

In order to support M'Grorty's motion, the Woman's League resolved to hold a meeting to discuss the question the week before it was to come forward in the House, and to give the greater weight to their debate they invited the Honourable Mr. Brereton, the leader of the Opposition, who was known to be unsound on the question of women sitting in Parliament, to attend and explain his reasons for objecting to their exercising this right. They were so confident in the justice of their cause that they feared no discussion. Nay, they even enjoyed some opposition, as it added importance to their proceedings, and could do no harm in a vast gathering of sympathisers with their cause. Mr. Brereton at once, in his easy-going way, agreed to come. He rather fancied the idea of having a talk with his sister electors, though he had a strong objection, or rather perhaps it should be called dislike, to their sitting in Parliament. Logical or direct speaking was not his special gift, as we know. And as to some of the considerations that did influence him, he felt an old-fashioned disinclination to discuss them before all the young women whom he would have to confront at the meeting. He was by nature, too, a sympathetic man, and when brought face to face with a number of women, who were convinced of their right to become Members of Parliament, and were getting vexed and angry at this right being delayed, he felt half ashamed to vigorously denounce their aspirations as futile.

So, truth to say, he made a poor argument of it. He

began by expressing generally his admiration for woman. He said that he loved them all; and he laid much stress upon this declaration of his feelings as being thoroughly and deeply sincere, which indeed it was. But he questioned her aptitude for the work. It was not above her, but beneath her. He made a clumsy reference to a beautiful Arab steed in a dust-cart; and then asked—wanted to know, you see—if the beautiful creature really would enjoy being in the shafts, dust and all. And when she was drawing the cart, perhaps over a bad bit of Jordan's hard road, so to speak, what about her foal? Also, what about the horse, who ought to draw the dust-cart; where did he come in? Or, did he come in at all? If so, was it a case of tandem? and if also so, which animal came first? He repeated Shakespeare's saying, that if two men ride on a horse, one must ride first, but got confused in the attempt to show its relevancy to his argument. Finally, he recalled some of his Biblical recollections, and having made special reference to Sarah and Martha, he sat down, repeating the expression of his admiration for women generally.

Miss Gazelle rose amid general cheering. She presented, with her incisive, rather hard manner, quite a contrast to Mr. Brereton's easy-going, good-natured rhetoric. Perhaps by design, and to show how logical and unsentimental women could be, she was particularly self-contained in her manner, and her tone of voice was marked by a dignified severity. She passed by, in silent contempt, his laudatory references to the sex, but she thanked him for coming to explain his views, such as they were, in the face of day. She then took up his 'topics,' as she termed them, since she could not call them arguments, with a marked display of exactness and method in her style of dealing with them, and exposed, not merely their unsoundness, but their sheer futility. She excited general merriment by the manner in which she dealt with the dust-cart topic, and expressed her wonder that the honourable gentleman could have missed the obvious answer that his own illustration gave as to how the animals were to draw the cart. They were obviously to work together side by side in the shafts, each drawing the dusty load of public duties, exactly equal in burden, effort, sacrifice, and, she

added, sometimes stumbling or jibbing. When Mr. Brereton interjected, 'What about the foal?' she aroused great laughter by promptly replying that she need not answer foolish questions, which she pronounced *foalish* questions. She added that she was getting rather tired of these remarks about women's duties. They had no intention of neglecting them. Just the same old Tory objection was raised to their voting. But where was it now? As they all knew, committees of ladies were formed in each neighbourhood who, at election times, took their turn with the children, while the mothers were away on their public duties. What did a lady do when she followed a profession? Why, she engaged another lady to look after the washing-up at home. Miss Gazelle disdained any sort of peroration as being a weakness unworthy of a business woman, and sat down abruptly when, as she observed, she had at any rate got the dust-cart out of the way.

The applause was loud indeed when she concluded, and there was a general feeling that the vigorous speeches of several ladies who followed, while useful as enlightening public opinion, were not required to complete the discomfiture of old Mr. Brereton. The most scathing exposure, however, which he suffered was from Miss Grace Hetty, a young lady who had, though she was only eighteen, just passed her first year as 'Freshman' at the William Dorland University. She was cutting in her sarcasms upon Mr. Brereton's round-about rhetoric, and carried the whole audience with her enthusiastically as she exploded, with her compact logic, his fallacies one after the other. As to his Biblical examples, she could barely restrain within polite grounds her scorn for the fancy that some elderly persons, she said, had for disinterring old mummies, and then rattling their bones at living people. When she sat down the applause was even more spirited than that which had greeted Miss Gazelle. Several old and gray-headed men listened to her speech with rapt attention, and appeared to specially enjoy her exposure of their co-mate in years, while they hammered upon the floor vigorously with their sticks and umbrellas in order to show their admiration for the speaker, and also to add the weight of their moral support to her arguments.

The brunt of the wordy conflict was left to the young ladies ; but towards the close of the discussion, the Honourable Mr. M'Grorty, who was in a front seat on the platform, and who appeared to follow with close attention the arguments of Miss Gazelle and Miss Grace Hetty, asked to be allowed to add, as he expressed it, just a link or two to the already complete chain of reasoning by which the cause of woman had been sustained. He had, in fact, nothing new to say ; nor, whatever were his convictions upon the question, had he the personal feeling that actuated the young women, who resented as a slight upon their sex the refusal to admit them to a position that many useless men were welcomed to. M'Grorty could be good-tempered about the subject, as the wrong done to women did not come home to him in the same way that it did to Miss Gazelle. He spoke pleasantly and was generally admitted to have made a most happy speech. What was most noticeable about it, though, was his tone of deference to Mr. Brereton, which was the more striking in contrast to the severity of Miss Grace Hetty. Perhaps it was his disinclination to hit a man who was down, as Mr. Brereton evidently was that evening. But, whatever the cause, he certainly began his little speech in a subdued, conciliatory tone, as he looked round with a bright, almost sweet, smile at Mr. Brereton, who had sat, resting back in his chair, smiling too, and muttering objections to the different points that Miss Hetty made against him. M'Grorty treated the question as one that had been settled, so far as the argument could settle it, and only wished to express his regret that, in this instance, the generous impulses of his old friend were hampered by his intellectual mistakes. But he was mild, almost respectful, in his tone. Undoubtedly that evening the two men who spoke appeared to be more amiable and less willing to wound any one than were the women. They presented to the public the outward aspect, at least, of creatures who were less fitted to face the harsh world than were their sisters or daughters. In comparison, they seemed to be kind-hearted, easy-going, more accessible to consideration for others. Several of the elderly men noticed this, and it confirmed them in their opinion of the absolute fitness of women for public life.

Miss Gazelle and Miss Hetty enjoyed the evening thoroughly. It was not merely that the excitement was a relief from the monotony of indoor life, but it is pleasant to all of us to feel victorious, and to be acclaimed as conquerors. Miss Grace Hetty was next day the heroine of the Girls' Club at the University—the Sappho Club.

Resolutions that pledged all electors, men and women, to support Mr. M'Grorty's Bill were passed with enthusiasm, that honourable gentleman himself calling for three cheers in honour of the cause at the conclusion of the proceedings. It was resolved also to present a petition to the House of Representatives, and this, it was decided, was to be entrusted to the care of Mr. Harding Buck, Member for Moodyville. Miss Gazelle considered that this would be a politic course, as, from a conversation she had had with that gentleman, she judged that he was, as she expressed it, 'rather wobbly on the question.'

As the day that was fixed for the debate drew near, there was much enthusiasm among the advocates of Woman's Rights, and also a good deal of interest excited among the public generally. On the appointed evening the House was filled, and the gallery for the general public crowded.

Mr. M'Grorty, who was now to advocate the rights of woman, was a more popular champion than Frankfort. Plain family men often wondered at his chivalrous belief in the power for good in public affairs of woman. For he was not a family man himself. He appeared to prefer single life, since it was hard to believe that he could not have found some partner to accept him, as he was decidedly good-looking, and had been successful in his career. He even preserved a youthful appearance as years came upon him, and was always especially careful about his dress. He and the tasteful, tiny bouquet in his button-hole were among the most polished and striking things, in the personal line, that Parliament had to show. Among his fellow-members he was generally known as the handsome man of the House. Later on in this history his political character will claim further inquiry at our hands, but for the present we meet him as the bright champion of woman.

The Ladies' Gallery in the chamber was an open com-

partment divided by a light balustrade from the legislators' benches—not a belated cage perched away out of sight, and almost out of hearing. It was generally well filled every evening, but upon this occasion it was crowded. The ladies were intelligent and attentive listeners; but at times, as might be expected, signs of their feelings were apparent, friendly or hostile, as the case might be, to the various views of the speakers.

M'Grorty was naturally an ornate and diffusive debater, but in moving the second reading of his Bill he was at pains to be more logical than was his wont. He began by saying that he could understand, though he did not agree with, those who held that the political sphere was not Woman's sphere. But the House and the country with a splendid unanimity had scouted that view. Woman, it was declared, should undertake political duties. Did Honourable Members—any of them—mean to say that their wives and sisters were so inferior to them that they were only fit to discharge the humble function of casting perhaps a useless vote into the ballot-box—that they might join in the jostle about the polling-booths, but not approach the sacred halls of the Legislature? The Premier had said that they had not got experience; but their whole political system was based upon giving people rights and letting them learn how to use them by using them. The right to vote had been given to them not alone upon the ground that they were as intelligent as men and as much affected by the laws, but because the old idea that they could be merged in and acted for by their male kin was thoroughly false and unjust. If this was not so there was no reason for giving them the independent vote. If it was so, was it just to compel them to take as representatives those whom the country had decided they should not be asked to trust to act for them as voters? He could understand those who said to the women of the country, Do trust your men to vote for you. And he understood and believed those who said, Don't trust your men to vote for you. But his intellectual powers were not strong enough to follow the reasoning of those who said, Don't trust your men to vote for you, but you must trust them to act for you when you have voted, and to give effect

to your votes as they think best. There was sense in the old view—of a kind—that men should act for women in politics, as they did in so many other matters. And there was a grander sense in the new and enlightened view that women should assert their own individuality. But the half-and-half business of giving votes and stopping there was in truth the weak and shiftily device of those who wished to have the credit of being advanced men, and then consoled themselves for advocating what they did not believe in by making its practical application a sham. His Bill did not compel any constituency to elect a woman. Some women might not be fitted for politics. Many constituencies might not care for women to represent them. He only said that if the woman was adapted for the work, *and* if the people wanted to have her, that they should not be prevented from doing so by an arbitrary law. Those who opposed it must hold that, however much the people in any district might wish to have a woman as their representative, no matter how superior she may be to any one else they could get, yet they should be prevented forcibly from the free exercise of their franchise and compelled to take a person whom they did not wish to take. What justification could there be for thus interfering with the free choice of the electors, which was the very rock foundation of their whole system? Then would Honourable Members think only for one moment of the vast amount of intelligence, good manners, and high morality that was lost to that House by this forceful exclusion of one-half of the population, and that admittedly the best half. Having argued his case thus far, he felt free to give more vent to warm and generous feelings on the subject. He begged the House to rise superior to the platitudes of fossilised Toryism. They had met them before. They knew them of old. They were trotted out time after time to oppose everything and anything new. He need not repeat them. They knew them by heart. But enlightenment came along all the same. The remedy for this injustice was bound to come. It was coming. It was already nigh. They could hear the rumbling of its wheels. Not the House, not the Government, not even Sir Donald himself, could stop the emancipation of half the population. (Here Sir Donald looked across the

House with a harsh, crabbed smile, and gave a slight scoffing cheer.) The Honourable the Premier might smile, if he called it a smile, and might cheer, if he called it a cheer, but neither his smile nor his cheer, nor, he might add, his tear, would stop the advent of Freedom. He might as well propose to place his veto upon the rising sun. He would not threaten doubters with the avenging vote of half the electors at the next general election. He would rather appeal to their sense of justice as fathers, as husbands, as brothers, as sons—nay, as men!

The applause that followed this peroration was perhaps the louder as it partly served as a vent for the pent-up feelings of uneasiness that possessed many Members about this troublesome question that was thus obtruded upon them. And there was no denying the force of what M'Grorty had said. The Opposition uttered loud cries for the Premier, who, it was a satisfaction to feel, was in a greater difficulty about it than they were. But Sir Donald did not care to speak if he could avoid it, and certainly not early in the debate. So Slater Scully was put up to make as good a case for delay as he could. The task was an uncongenial one to the Minister of the Water Bureau, and he had to rely upon his adaptability as an advocate to carry him through at all.

He stated that the Government hailed this discussion as another torch lighting the path of Progress, another milestone upon the broad highway of Liberalism. Who would dare to quench the torch? Who to block the highway? Certainly not His Majesty's Government. Yet true Liberals might differ somewhat as to the manner of the measure, the time of this grand reform. Some of his ardent friends might be apt to say with Macbeth, 'If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well it were done quickly.' Others, equally devoted to Woman's cause, might be pondering upon the profound sentiment of another poet, that raw haste was half-sister to delay.

To Mr. M'Grorty's sarcastic inquiry as to how the Government were going to vote upon this question, Slater Scully replied that he honoured his friend's thirst for knowledge, and that it would be gratified in the legitimate

manner, when the division bells sounded their melodious summons to Honourable Members to divide. After discussing, without directly opposing, M'Grorty's arguments, he congratulated that gentleman upon the enthusiasm which he displayed in the cause, which, he said, was all the more remarkable when they contemplated the forlorn condition of bachelor life in which his friend, no doubt unwillingly, pined. If bringing women into Parliament, even prematurely, would tend to give his friend any prospect of rescue from his present fate, then he could only say that he could not wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

Miss Gazelle, who had a front seat in the Ladies' Gallery, could not help exclaiming in rather a loud whisper, 'What nonsense!' And nonsense it certainly was; but yet it enabled Slater Scully to wind up with a laugh, and to finish his uncongenial task with some appearance of credit.

Mr. Brandreth next addressed the House; but as generally nobody paid attention to what he said, his remarks attracted little notice, till after a while it appeared that he was speaking in support of the Bill. He said that he was conscious that some would be surprised at his view of the question, but that, nevertheless, as he conscientiously held it, he would briefly say what it was. As they knew, he had opposed the law that was passed last session giving women new political rights and duties. But it being now the law that they should discharge those duties, he would not be one to say that she should be confined to the lowest sphere of politics, and that she was unfit to aspire to the elevated sphere in which he and Honourable Members around him moved.

Old Mr. Brandreth said this quite simply and sincerely, and looking round the House in his quiet way, was going on to another point in his speech, when Mr. Brown-Hawkins broke into a laugh and an ironical cheer at the mention of the elevated sphere. This naturally annoyed several Members, and Mr. David Stoker rose and, with his head posed upon one side, in a determined manner, as if a crisis had now arisen that called upon him to summon all his resolution said:

‘Mr. Speaker, sir, I rise to a point of order.’

‘What is the Honourable Member’s point of order?’ inquired the Speaker.

‘My point of order, sir, is that the Honourable Member for Towrie has no right to describe this House as an elevated sphere—leastways when his tone of voice conveys and makes straight that it is not an elevated sphere.’

Hereupon a lively diversion from the main line of the debate took place. Mr. Brandreth was quite taken aback, and positively denied that there was anything in his tone of voice to justify the imputation of the Honourable Member for Dead Hatch. Several Members informed the House of the impression that Mr. Brandreth’s words had made upon them, and this impression appeared to be a conflicting one. Mr. Tom Creed, the Member for Snaresborough, asserted that the responsible person was Mr. Brown-Hawkins, as it was his ‘hear, hear’ and laugh that caused the mischief. Several Members followed up this aspect of the case, and it was discussed rather fully. The whole House seemed to take a deep interest in this point of order that had suddenly arisen. Sir Donald, who wanted to get rid of the question without a division, whispered to Slater Scully to speak upon the point of order, and to keep going while Du Tell went round the House to see if a count-out could be arranged for.

To readers who are not familiar with Parliamentary practice, it may be explained that a deliberate count-out is where a sufficient number of Members agree to withdraw from the House, so as to leave behind less than the number necessary to form a quorum present. One of the conspirators remains to call the attention of the Speaker to the fact that there is no quorum; upon which that high functionary looks up in a surprised manner, and begins to slowly and solemnly count the House; and finding that unfortunately the requisite number of Members are not present, he, with solemnity, adjourns the House to the next day of meeting, and the business that is on hand stands postponed, and is probably never heard of again. It is a simple and favourite method of getting rid of business that it is not desired to deal with directly.

Slater Scully at once rose to perform his part of the

arrangement. He began in a leisurely manner—for there was no hurry—by taking a comprehensive look around the House. He then remarked that the point of order which had been raised was one of the most serious, and, in the light of the further view advanced by his friend Mr. Creed, one of the most difficult that had come before them since, he might say, the first dawn of their political rights as free men. It was intricate, owing to the perplexity of persons involved—or rather the duality of persons. The point was simply this—if one Member makes a remark that by itself might not attract notice, and then another Member adds interjections, exclamations, cheers, applause, possibly the ironical *bravissimo*, that give the original remark an offensive aspect—place it in a dangerous light—then how stands it? Two questions present themselves, indeed three, said Slater Scully, holding up his hand and spreading out three fingers widely apart to illustrate the problem. Is the Member who used the ambiguous expression responsible, or is the Member whose action imparts to it its colouring answerable, or are both? A perplexing question! To put a case that might be called analogous—if one man supplies the gun and another the powder, or rather, if one man holds the gun, and just as he fires, another man, by touch or otherwise—it was immaterial to the question how—gives it a turn, direction, or scope different, he would even assume quite different, from that——

Here the sound of laughter from the front Opposition Bench gave him opportunity for a much-desired pause. He turned to face Mr. Brereton, who sat chuckling at his effort on the point of order, and brought the full glare of his spectacles to bear upon him. He was going to denounce him for his frivolity upon this serious crisis concerning the privileges of Parliament, and had just began, ‘Nero fiddled when Rome——’ when Sir Donald whispered to him to stop as it was all right. So, turning away from the leader of the Opposition as if in silent indignation, he concluded with a few general remarks; and then the Speaker rose and briefly stated that further discussion upon the point raised was not necessary, as the Honourable Member for Towrie was quite in order in describing the House as an elevated sphere.

Our politician, who had gone out into the library a short time before, had not heard of the intended count-out. He felt that it would be unjust to deny women the right to sit in Parliament. He saw that his friend Slater Scully had really trifled with the whole question; and though M^cGrorty had put the case forcibly, yet there were some important points still to be made, particularly upon the old excuse for opposition to all reform—that it is not the proper time.

He began his speech by adverting to the fact that all who had spoken admitted the right of women to sit in Parliament. This being so, what was the reason for refusing them justice *now*?

Saying this, our politician looked round the House, as if to challenge a reply, feeling at the same time that a reply would not be very easy. He was surprised to notice the number of vacant seats that there were, and the still, quiet tone that seemed to be creeping over the House, in striking contrast to the excitement that had prevailed during the discussion of the point of order. As he proceeded with his speech, Member after Member, first from one bench, then from another, rose, and having gathered up their papers, quietly and slowly disappeared, like Arabs striking their tents and stealing away. Still he held on, and was getting interested in his subject. He felt that he was making it clear even to Slater Scully how unworthy of Parliament it would be to refuse woman's just aspirations upon frivolous grounds. That gentleman, however, kept smiling at him in such a demonstrative manner that Frankfort felt rather nettled at this continued levity, and was about to pointedly appeal to his honourable friend to be serious for once, when Du Tell, who had been left in the House to call attention to the want of a quorum when the required number had gone out, rose, and peering round upon our politician, slightly inclining his head as he spoke, said that he much regretted to have to interrupt his honourable friend, but that a sense of duty compelled him to call the attention of the Speaker to the fact that there was not a quorum of the House present to hear the valuable argument of his honourable friend upon this great question.

The Speaker looked up, then slowly rose, and with great deliberation 'counted the House.' There were only twenty Members present. The electric bells rang out their appointed time in vain. Murmurs of voices were heard in the corridors, footsteps sounded near the doors, but the echoes died away mysteriously. Walter Crane hurried from his perch in the gallery to the Ministers' Room in case he should be wanted to get anybody, but he saw directly that his services were not required. The prescribed time for waiting for a House expired without a quorum being secured, and so the Speaker declared that the House stood adjourned to the next appointed day of meeting. When that day came fresh business had precedence; no other opportunity for taking up M'Grorty's Bill presented itself, and thus that Bill, the rest of our politician's speech, and the decision of the House upon the question were remitted to the future. No one ever knew upon which side Slater Scully would have voted, if there had been a division that night. When some one remarked this to him, he said, smiling, that he could quite believe it, as he did not know himself.

Our politician, as he gathered up his papers, certainly felt that the result of the evening's work was unsatisfactory. He did not yet, in his Parliamentary career, realise how necessary it is for a body of men, any of whose members can propose anything, to have some power, whether express or derived from custom, to evade, or at least postpone, dealing with unseasonable propositions. There could be no doubt that M'Grorty's arguments were, as arguments, unanswerable. The Parliament of Excelsior had adopted Woman's Suffrage, owing to motives of various kinds. When asked to bring the thing to its logical issue, they were unwilling to do so; because they did not want to have women displacing them, or even sitting with them, and the motives that led to giving the vote did not, at present, act to impel the granting of the right to sit in Parliament. Whenever the public wish, or political exigencies, called for this further concession, it would be granted directly. But till then the question was simply evaded.

Our politician, in his vexation at the discomfiture of a reform, and also at the collapse of his speech, did not stop

to consider all this ; and could not help, when leaving the House to go into the corridor, exclaiming to himself, 'What a farce !' A sort of involuntary stir of some one behind a pillar that he was passing caused him to look round, and there he saw the patient personality of Walter Crane, waiting quietly for the new Minister's bag. Frankfort felt that desire to talk to some one which comes to us naturally as a vent for one's feelings.

'Well, you see, Crane, they won't have ladies as members—not just yet.'

'Yes, your Honer. Dreadful true, your Honer,' replied Crane, with his deferential bend, as of old. But he seemed to feel more concern in the question than was usual with him, and appeared to be about to say something further. Frankfort stopped for the moment and turned towards him encouragingly to hear what he had to say. He only repeated in a mild tone of inquiry—

'Not just yet, your Honer ?'

'That's it, Crane—not just yet. Sure to come along presently'; and our politician walked slowly down the passage. He thought that he heard a suppressed exclamation, such as had attracted his notice when Crane was polishing the leg of the table during his interview with Mr. Lavender at the Water Bureau, when he went to inquire about the Brassville Reservoir. But looking round he only saw Crane meekly following him with composed looks, but evidently with something still upon his mind. However, he only said in the same tone of quiet inquiry—

'Yes, your Honer, sure to come? To be sure, your Honer. And will they be standing for Ministers too, your Honer ?'

'To be sure, Crane, some will—not many, perhaps. Why not, Crane ?'

'Why not, your Honer? To be sure, I couldn't think of taking that much upon myself to say. It's for your Honer and the other gentlemen to think of these abstruse sort of things. And I wish your Honer good - night. There's His Excellency and the bag now.' And Crane hurried off with a suppressed groan.

The real cause of Walter Crane's perplexed air was a

fearful dread which was creeping over him lest now, since women were about to enter Parliament, one of them should become Minister of the Water Bureau. This appeared to poor Wally to be an upside-down sort of business that would fatally embitter the evening of his days. By nature he should reverence his chief; but how could he divert his reverential feelings into such a new channel as this? In his consternation he was very near breaking out and confiding his fear to Frankfort; but he checked himself, and hence the half-suppressed exclamation that our politician had heard. The only relief open to him now was to disburden his soul on his next quiet Sunday afternoon at Grubb Lane. There he consoled himself with a free expression of his pent-up feelings. His nephew Mick sympathised with him generally; but Ben Mule, partly for the sake of argument, disputed with him, falling back upon the old joke—that there were so many old women in high places that a few more would not matter. But Crane, who was beginning to feel a personal interest in the question, became indignant with him, and demanded how he would like to have his cabs driven by a woman. Ben Mule admitted the fact that he would not like it, but disputed the relevancy of the implied argument, as he maintained that driving cabs was a specially male function, like navigating a ship. Upon this Crane, with a contemptuous toss of his usually compliant head, declined further discussion with a man who didn't know better than to rank the driving of his cabs before the management of the Water Bureau.

As our politician walked away, M'Grorty joined him. Frankfort, still indignant, condoled with him upon the way his Bill had been treated. If Slater Scully were not such a good-natured fellow that no one could get angry with him, the way he went on that evening was enough to make any one regard him as a mere humbug. His absurd joke about M'Grorty being unmarried was mere vulgar personality. He sympathised with M'Grorty upon his being exposed to these personal attacks. That gentleman did not appear to be at all inconsolable upon these points. As to the Bill, why, if he had to bring it up session after session, till justice prevailed, before an admiring crowd in the Ladies' Gallery, he

would still be found ready at the call of duty. Till the thing was done he was the leader of an important movement. Meanwhile the fair claimants had, at any rate, votes as electors, and were free to give them to the friends of progress and enlightenment. As to the personal side of the matter, he quite agreed in condemning Slater Scully for his absurd conduct. But he did not seem to be distressed upon the subject. To the bachelor who is past forty impeachments of a tender kind, however satirical, carry a balm with them. It is so pleasing to people who are no longer young to be the subject of notice by or on behalf of the other sex. They can stand being painted as rather dangerous people. They can put up with it. At least, we have to, thought M'Grorty. As for our politician, though he was disappointed that Woman's rights should have been delayed by a subterfuge, he felt that they were only delayed. The second step in her political advancement could not be denied to her, unless the first step was to be a sham.

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